

Commentary

Volume Sixty-two, Number One, July 1976

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& AMERICAN
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ALLENDE
FELL
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IMAGINING
THE
HOLOCAUST
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& "MISSOURI BREAKS"
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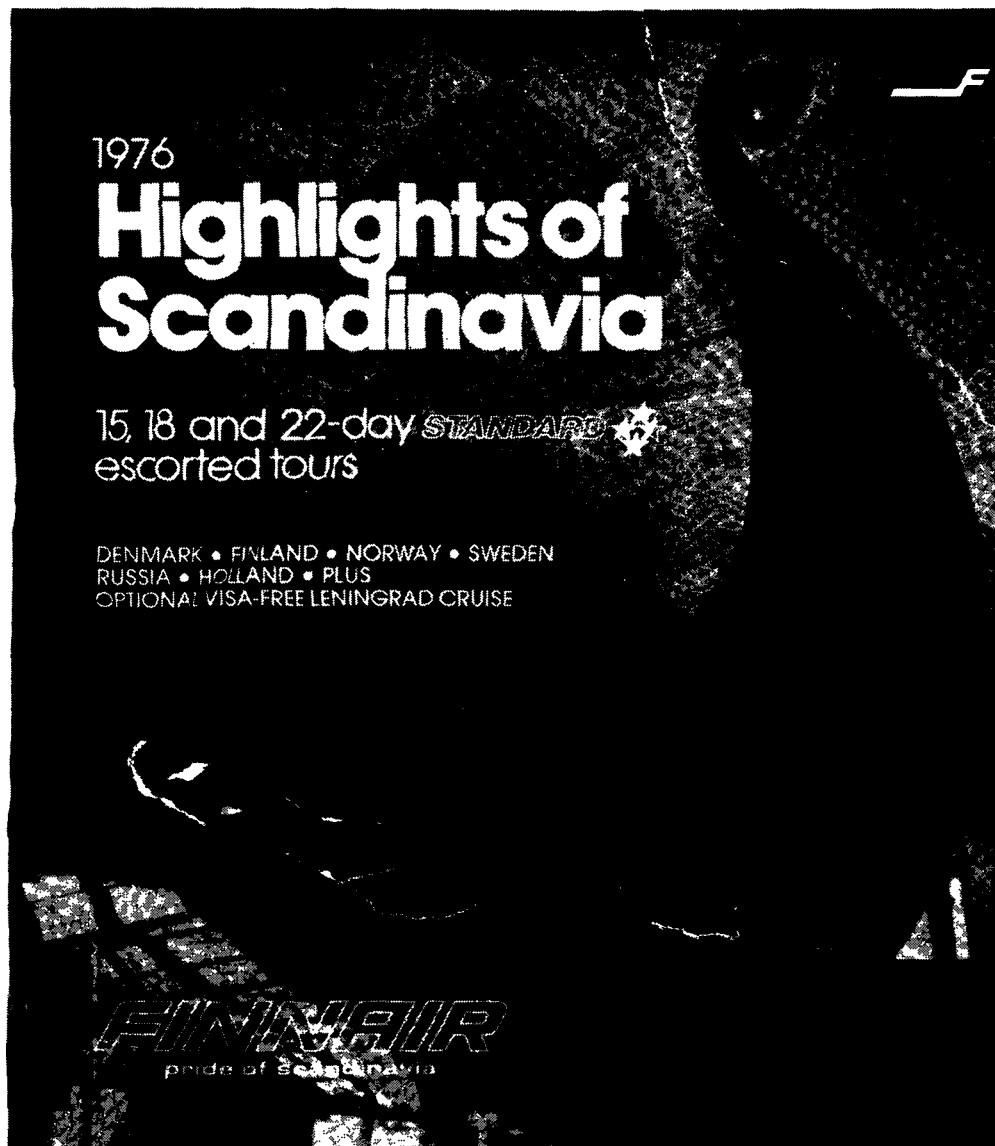
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Letters from Readers

"Britannica 3"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations to Samuel McCracken ["The Scandal of *Britannica 3*," February] and to COMMENTARY on further exposing the scandal of the new *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. He touches almost all the bases with appropriate emphasis, particularly the huge and deplorable stain of ideological and political bias.

The fact is that the organization of the work—particularly the separation of the larger articles in the *Macropaedia* from the shorter ones in the *Micropaedia*—is more than an "eccentric innovation" or a "commercial novelty." It is a function of the ideological bent that animates the whole enterprise.

The encyclopedia as a whole was intended to underline larger unities among human groupings and activities generally as well as greater cohesion among the intellectual disciplines. To exemplify the latter theme, the *Propaedia* (the volume that organizes knowledge) was created; it functions as a structural illustration of the "faith that the whole world of knowledge is a single universe of discourse." The former theme was implemented by fashioning huge, synthetic unities and by organizing subjects under broad titles pitched at a high level of generality. These articles were grouped in the main body of the set and the rest (whatever could not be made to fit the pattern) was dumped into the trash can of the reference index. Despite the announced intention of being neutral and descriptive, the result is as prescriptive and tendentious as Mr. McCracken claims. In an age of intellectual and social fragmentation, it could hardly be otherwise.

There is no doubt that a quasi-public resource of enormous influence has been deformed. There is considerable doubt, however, that demonstrating that it has been deformed is going to make any difference. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is marketed by high-pressure sales techniques directed largely at low-income groups. (A recent *TV Guide* had a *Britannica* ad in which the lure was none other than the star of *I Love Lucy*.) The market for these books is, therefore, likely to be unaffected by the kind

of exposé offered by Mr. McCracken. What affects the publishers of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* are sales and profits, and only when these begin to dip will there be any changes.

ROBERT G. HAZO
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

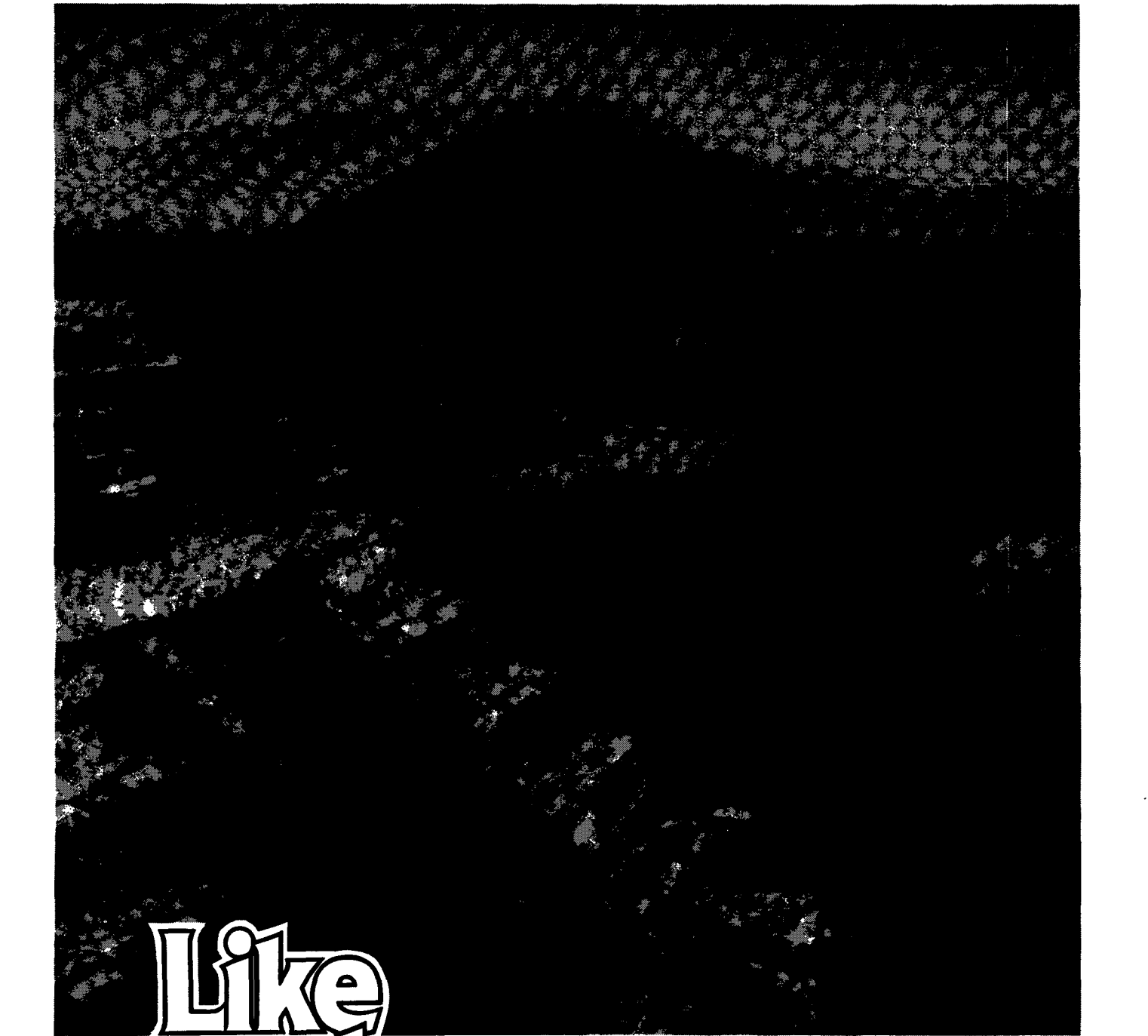
TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Samuel McCracken's critique of *Britannica 3* is the finest of several I have read. W. T. Couch, in a letter in the *University Bookman* (Summer 1975), makes several comments and asks several questions along the same lines as those of Mr. McCracken.

Mr. Couch writes that "instead of facing the real problem of eliminating fragmentation, *Britannica 3* in its three-part organization simply indulged in a new form of the old gimmickry into which encyclopedia salesmen have tended to push editors when editors have been unable to do the work that lessens the need for spurious sales arguments." Mr. McCracken says virtually the same thing when he writes that "this arrangement has nothing to recommend it except commercial novelty."...

I am particularly interested in the last three paragraphs of Mr. McCracken's essay. I worked for about six weeks as a salesman for Britannica, Inc., and I was given the opportunity to experience the commercial merchandising of this product. Not once during the short training period were the salesmen told anything about the company's difficulties with the Federal Trade Commission. We were told that other encyclopedia salesmen had been using deceptive practices to sell books, but not Britannica.

I suggest that there is an irreconcilable contradiction between what the editors of *Britannica 3*, especially Robert Maynard Hutchins and Mortimer Adler, have written and believed in for many years, and what they say and believe when marketing these books. . . . If every prospective customer for the Britannica products were successfully educated along the lines Hutchins and Adler recommend in their writings, then the customers could not and would not buy these books from salesmen who mouth their spurious arguments. Of course, if the salesman stopped their spurious sales methods, if they were



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thoroughly educated (not "trained") to explain the books... then the consistency of the company and the university would be impressive and not at all contradictory, even though profits might decline.

DAVID MURPHY

Lebanon, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Reviewing a forty-million-word reference work appears on the face of it a formidable task, but since the 15th edition of *Britannica* came out I have been astonished at the lighthearted intrepidity with which lay-reviewers approach it. At least three pieces of reviewing equipment would seem to be indispensable: an expert knowledge of some major encyclopedic subject area, e.g., one of the physical sciences, to permit evaluation of a representative part of the coverage; experience in editorial work, to give insight into the problems of production and how well they were solved; and investment of a substantial amount of time in preparation for the review.

Samuel McCracken does not claim or give evidence of the first requirement (and in fact he airily disclaims all knowledge of science). His erroneous analysis of the faults of the *Micropaedia* demonstrates his lack of the second. I should think, then, that his shortcomings in respect to the first two requirements might have stimulated him to an exceptional effort to fulfill the third; evidently not. The *Micropaedia's* innumerable excellent entries nowhere found in the 14th edition entirely elude him.

But what I am most puzzled by, in Mr. McCracken's article and in several others as well, is the reviewers' incapacity to put a finger on any of the genuine faults in the new *Britannica*. One exception is the review Robert McClintock of Teacher's College prepared for the National Academy of Education. I don't particularly agree with Professor McClintock's pedagogically-oriented critique, but I respect his bringing a legitimate viewpoint to his review, along with a seriousness of purpose.

The inept journalism that posterously accused *Britannica's* top editors of a left-wing bias, a charge to which Mr. McCracken also subscribes, has been thoroughly discredited in a point-by-point rebuttal that caused the Washington

Post, at least, to print a commendably full retraction.

JOSEPH GIES

Oakton, Virginia

SAMUEL MCCRACKEN writes:

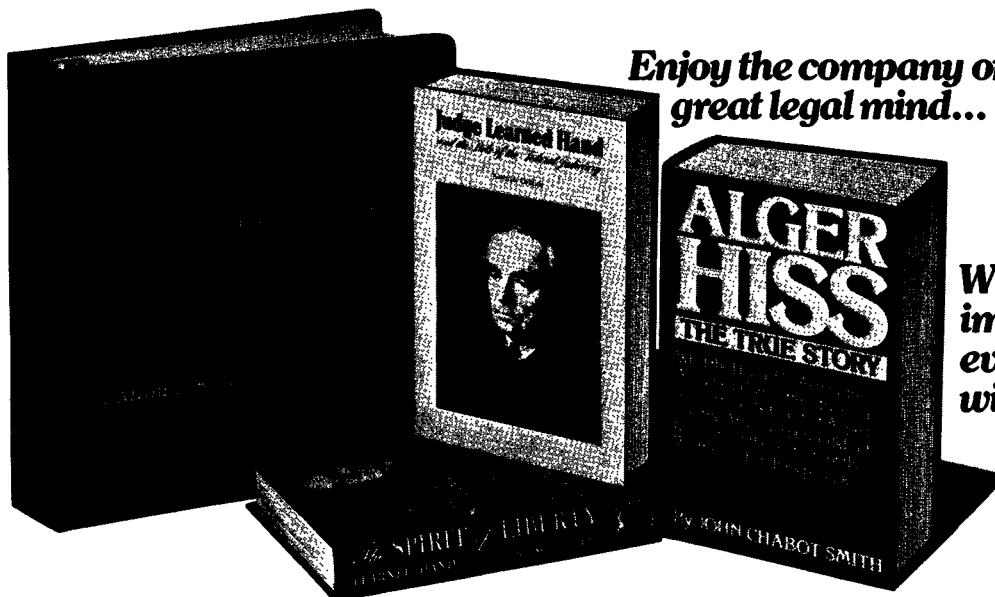
David Murphy rightly suggests that Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler ought to face up to the behavior of their wayward god-child. The scandal of *Britannica 3* is sufficiently malodorous that these men ought either to provide a cogent and persuasive public defense or to dissociate themselves from *Britannica 3*. Much the same, of course, might be said about the University of Chicago, whose protective aegis continues to lend a bogus respectability to the enterprise.

But away with this negativism. It is a pleasure to report that in Joseph Gies, *Britannica 3* has found a defender fully worthy of it.

One of Mr. Gies's difficulties is his inability to read. I nowhere "disclaim all knowledge of science," gravely, tearfully, or airily. I do disclaim the kind of expert knowledge of science requisite to review major articles. As a matter of fact, I have a serious amateur's knowledge of astronomy and have dabbled fairly widely elsewhere in the sciences. But my professional field is the humanities, especially literature and history. I presume—it is not always easy to know what Mr. Gies really means—that he would have had me undertake a comprehensive review of the articles on English literature. But I proceeded on quite a different basis, emulating the state's practice in testing drivers. If you can't pass the vision test, they don't let you take the written test; and if you can't pass the written test, they don't let you take the driving test. My article was about how badly *Britannica 3* fails the vision test. (And Professor McClintock's article, alluded to by Mr. Gies, is about how *Britannica 3* fails the written test.)

Mr. Gies blandly refers to my "erroneous analysis of the faults of the *Micropaedia*," but he neither specifies nor documents this alleged erroneousness. He does not even make clear whether he believes that there are errors in the *Micropaedia* that I have failed to analyze correctly, or that I err in seeing errors there at all. He uses his unilateral declaration of error as evidence for the idea that I lack "experience in editorial work, to give insight into

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the problems of production and how well they were solved." This appears to mean that it takes an encyclopedia editor to exculpate one. As it happens, I have a fair amount of experience with editorial work. But that is irrelevant. No amount of whining from *Britannica* 3 about the difficulties of production could negate its errors and intellectual shabbiness. In this, as in all intellectual endeavor, performance is what counts.

Mr. Gies's evidence that I did not spend enough time on my article is that the "innumerable excellent entries" in the *Micropaedia* that do not derive from the 14th edition "elude" me. That I have not dealt with such capsules—there are some—is, however, not a sign of precipitate haste. The amount of time I spent in preparing the article—over a period extending from July 1974 to the end of 1975—was, I suspect, the despair of the editors of COMMENTARY; and my original manuscript was nearly three times as long as my final one. Whatever my faults, haste is not one of them.

I did not deal with *Britannica* 3's pretensions to be a university because I found it so inadequate as an almanac. Professor McClintock's review is devastating, but marred by his erroneous belief that *Britannica* 3 is a superior reference work.

Mr. Gies's final paragraph is still troubled by basic reading difficulties. I nowhere accused *Britannica* 3's editors of "left-wing bias." Given their practice, I do not, however, see how such a charge, which might be false, could be preposterous. *Britannica* 3's rebuttal to those who criticized it for publishing articles on the USSR and the East European countries supplied by the governments of those countries, besides containing a statement to the effect that no fair-minded person could believe *Britannica* 3's claim that the Communist party was the "leading" political party (i.e., one of several) in the Soviet Union, consisted primarily of the claim that as long as the *Britannica* told the truth in articles on the history of, say, the Soviet Union, it did not matter whether it lied in another article describing the country. I have already discussed this curious practice in my article. Since the editor, Warren Preece, has explained that the *Britannica* retains the right to edit its articles as it pleases and to print them anonymously over the author's objections, the encyclopedia

clearly *embraces* the various blatant falsehoods uttered by its Soviet authors.

And Mr. Gies gets it all wrong once again when he says that the Washington *Post* printed "a commendably full retraction" of an article critical of *Britannica* 3. To the contrary, as Mr. Gies would have seen were he capable of reading an English sentence, the senior editors of the *Post*'s news department stood by the article as printed. The *Post*'s ombudsman, complained to by the editors of the *Britannica*, published a piece agreeing with their view that occasional honesties always cancel out occasional lies. But even he denied that he was entering "a total defense of the *Britannica*."

Religion & Liberalism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I want to thank Peter L. Berger for his fair commentary and courteous praise of my book, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* [Books in Review, April]. One thing, though, puzzles me. He says quite rightly, and he was the first contemporary sociologist to raise the issue urgently, that the root problem of the time is the lack of any transcendental beliefs to provide meaning for the society. And he notes with disappointment that "there is not a word about religion in [my] final reaffirmation of the liberal creed."

In a limited sense that is true. My final essay is a reaffirmation of liberalism as a *political* creed. And I do not think that one can—or should—join religion and politics in a modern society. (And I would reaffirm, despite Mr. Berger's skepticism, the crucial role of constitutionalism and the Supreme Court in providing continuity and legitimacy for the peaceful settlement of conflict in society.) But I do believe strongly that a grounding in religion is a necessary condition for a society to provide moral meanings to its members. There is a chapter, which concludes part one of the book, on religion and culture, an essay that has earned me the animus of self-styled *philosophes*, wherein I say:

Despite the shambles of modern culture, some religious answer surely will be forthcoming, for religion is not (or no longer is) a "property" of society in the Durkheimian sense. It is a constitutive part of man's con-

sciousness: the cognitive search for the pattern of the "general order" of existence; the affective need to establish rituals and to make some conceptions sacred; the primordial need for relatedness to some others, or to a set of meanings which will establish a transcendent response to the self; and the existential need to confront the finalities of suffering and death.

The last paragraph of that essay is a statement on the need to restate the distinction between sacred and profane, and to enlarge our sense of what is and has to be sacred in the world, in order to maintain the redemptive process which is necessary for the continuity of fathers and sons in the linkage of generations. And such a religious commitment, I observe, involves a challenge to the modern liberal temper.

All of this, I would admit, is somewhat tantalizing perhaps, and would require another book to spell out. And that is exactly what I have been doing, and hope to publish in a few years.

DANIEL BELL

Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Peter L. Berger states that: "As Bell himself indicates so well, secularism has been the Achilles' heel of the liberal creed." This is a theme that is currently being emphasized by numerous so-called neo-conservatives, who admire some elements of liberalism, some elements of capitalism, but dislike the fact that liberal democracy has not been directly associated with certain lofty spiritual virtues. In other words, Mr. Berger and his intellectual comrades would like to combine a good deal of liberty with a great deal of spiritual ethics to give liberty its substance.

But why do they insist on finding the values, the spiritual ethics, in some kind of religion? Why do they have this invincible faith that religion is capable of providing human beings with the values that we must have both to live a life of dignity and to secure liberty?

Liberalism's fault does *not* lie in secularism. It lies in being closely tied to reductive materialism, the metaphysical idea that everything in nature is but a version of matter-in-motion. Admittedly, secularism is implied by this metaphysics, but other metaphysical positions,

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which allow for the most ennobling values, might imply secularism as well. Thus Spinoza's metaphysics implies secularism, but it also implies a very rigorous ethics and a place of dignity for all human life. One can easily read Aristotle as a naturalist who denied what religion demands, namely, the supernatural, yet left plenty of room for the most demanding and ennobling ethics anyone could imagine.

My fear is this: often capitalism or classical liberalism is "repaired" by injecting into it some system of religious ethics; but such religious ethics would simply subvert the liberty that classical liberalism views as politically primary. This is because religious ethics require grace, not reason, for their apprehension, and only a select group is privileged to receive this grace. In consequence, an elite is required to interpret, teach, and even enforce the ethics that religion offers. . . .

In fact, secularism does not deny the existence of values. It holds values to be non-mysterious. Only when secularism is identified with reductive materialism does it cancel out values from human existence. In light of this, I am suspicious that most of those who equivocate between secularism and reductive materialism want, in fact, a special position (epistemologically speaking) vis-à-vis the issue of what is of value in human existence. Such a position would insure that they alone could know, thus dictate, our values. This would produce what I call the spiritual welfare state!

Instead, liberalism should abandon its Hobbesian reductionism and return to Aristotle for a moral foundation. It will thereby escape both the phony value-free stance and the trap of religious morality without losing its superior theoretical position in the area of politics. (I think Leo Strauss hoped for this development.)

TIBOR R. MACHAN

SUNY-Fredonia
Fredonia, New York

Harry Wolfson

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Leon Wieseltier ["Philosophy, Religion & Harry Wolfson," April] is no doubt correct in his assertion that Harry A. Wolfson was never guilty of confusing his aim as a historian with his own personal position as a believing Jew. It is Mr. Wieseltier who is guilty of this confusion.

Mr. Wieseltier supposes that Wolfson "represent[s] the center of the Jewish tradition by Philo . . . and by Maimonides," and suggests that, according to Wolfson, "the Maimonidean synthesis" is "Judaism *par excellence*." He then allows himself the wry comment that "Wolfson's highly intellectualist view of Jewish tradition is not quite what most Jews mean and have meant by Jewish tradition." Next, he accuses Wolfson of having "fallen victim to . . . the tendency to ideologize Judaism, to defend it as essentially a world view, or feeling, or attitude, or creed." Finally, he sums it all up: for Wolfson, "the philosophical profession of faith seemed a sufficient guarantee of the Jewish tradition."

All of these suppositions and charges are false. Mr. Wieseltier has confused Wolfson's view of the history of philosophy with Wolfson's view of the Jewish tradition. And it is this confusion which, in turn, enables him to confuse Wolfson's aim as a historian with Wolfson's own personal position as a believing Jew.

In an important early essay, "The Needs of Jewish Scholarship in America" (an essay, incidentally, quoted several times by Mr. Wieseltier), Wolfson explains with characteristic precision his aims as a historian of philosophy and the connection between these aims and his own Jewish commitment:

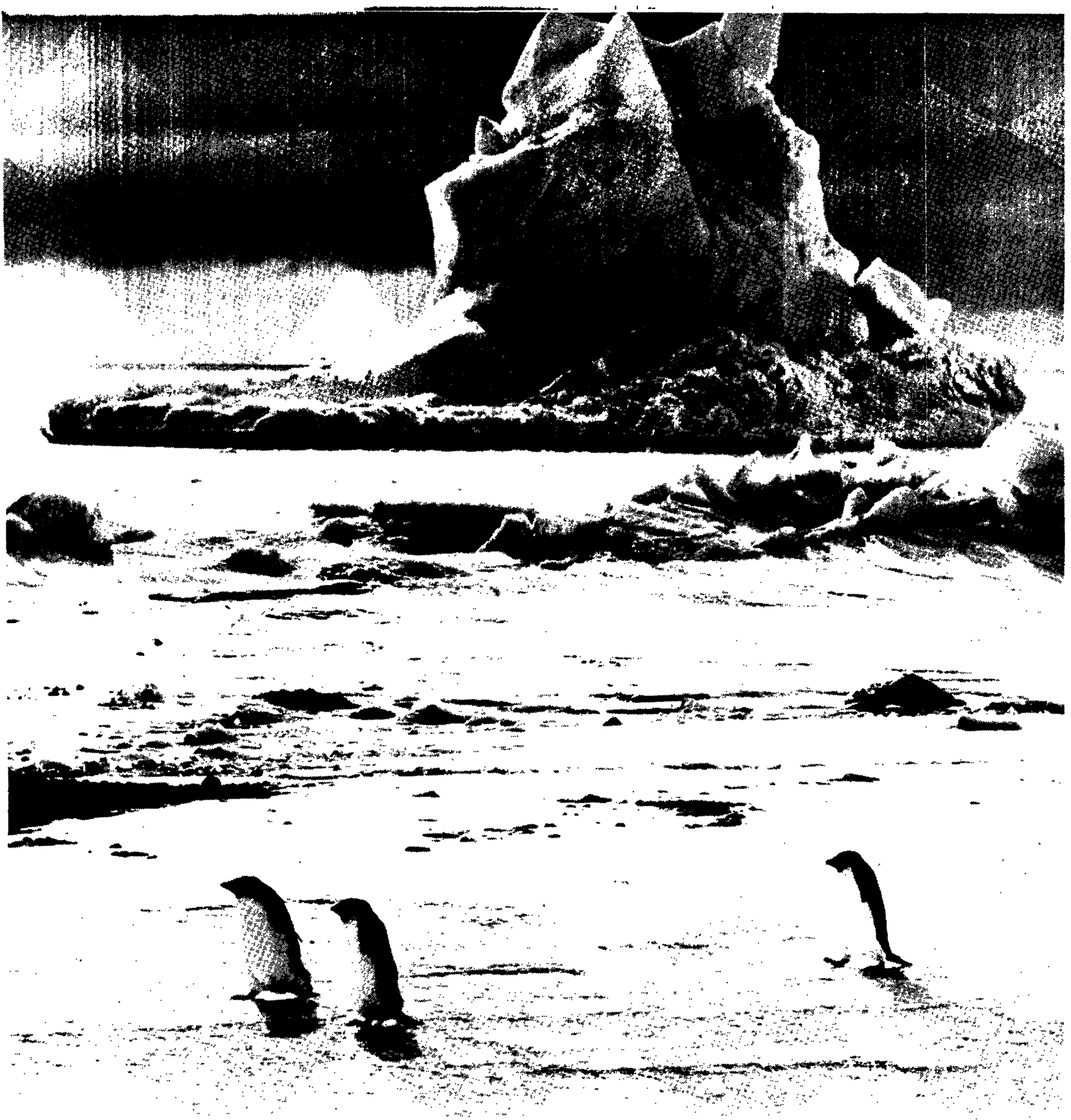
I do not mean to imply that I consider medieval Jewish philosophy to be the most important field of Jewish study. Hardly that. For I believe, just as our pious ancestors believed, though for different reasons, that the Talmud with its literature is the most promising field of study, the most fertile field of original research and investigation. But I believe that medieval Jewish philosophy is the only branch of Jewish literature, next to the Bible, which binds us to the rest of the literary world. In it we meet on common ground with civilized Europe and with part of civilized Asia and civilized Africa. Medieval philosophy is one philosophy written in three languages, Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin, and among these Hebrew holds the central and most important position. In it we have the full efflorescence of Arabic thought and the bud of much of scholasticism. It is in the interest of general culture and general scholarship that these hidden Hebrew treasures should be brought to light,

carefully edited, properly indexed, equipped with the necessary glossaries, with a system of cross-references and with all other critical apparatus, so that the world may readily recognize their value for a reconstruction of the history of philosophy. For the time will come when the history of philosophy, medieval as well as early modern, will have to be radically rewritten, and rewritten it will be as soon as the contents of these writings become more widely known.

Wolfson did not believe that Jewish philosophy was the center of the Jewish tradition: he dedicated his life to proving that it was the center of the *philosophic* tradition—or at least of the philosophic tradition from Philo to Spinoza. Far from arguing Judaism's identity with the philosophic tradition, he argued the latter's debt to the former. He could never have agreed that the philosophical profession of faith is a "sufficient guarantee of the Jewish tradition," for to his mind the "philosophical profession of faith" is not what is unique to Judaism, but indeed what is—or *was* until modern times—Judaism's "common ground with civilized Europe and with part of civilized Asia and civilized Africa." . . .

On the basis of his recurring confusion of the Jewish and philosophic traditions, Mr. Wieseltier builds his theory about Wolfson's personal religious views. He interprets Wolfson's famous self-description as a "non-observant Orthodox Jew" as equivalent to confession of some "philosophical" or "ideological" Orthodoxy without *halakha*. To be sure, Wolfson—who profoundly understood the genius of the Jewish tradition—would have criticized such an "Orthodoxy" no less vigorously than does Mr. Wieseltier. The expression "non-observant Orthodox Jew" no more suggests a new kind of Orthodoxy than does "non-practicing physician" suggest a new kind of medicine. Those curious about why Wolfson became "non-observant" will find better clues in his youthful essays about Jewish life in early 20th-century America than in his scholarly works on the history of philosophy.

However, one need not delve into Wolfson's personal religious life in order to appreciate the regret of his last years. As a scholar, he had set two goals: immediately, to publish and analyze medieval Hebrew philosophic texts; ulti-



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mately, to rewrite the history of philosophy in their light. His *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle* (1929) was a sure step toward the immediate goal, but only a step. Students of Jewish philosophy were now awaiting not only Wolfson's complete critical text of Crescas' *Light of the Lord*, but also the second part of his study on Crescas, which owing to "a regrettable last-minute decision" was not published in *Crescas' Critique*. Suddenly, however, Wolfson interrupted this work toward his immediate goal, intending to concentrate for just a few years on the ultimate goal. But by the time he had written *Spinoza* and *Philo*, it was already 1947. It now seemed to him necessary to supplement *Philo* with two concise monographs on the Philonic elements in early Christian and Muslim theology. He did not suspect that these two monographs would grow into enormous *opera* which would exhaust his remaining years, barring him from resuming the interrupted work toward his immediate goal. It is this failure to return to those "hidden Hebrew treasures" which was his most potent source of regret—and shall remain a source of regret to students of Jewish philosophy.

WARREN ZEV HARVEY
McGill University
Montreal, Quebec

LEON WIESELTIER writes:

Harry Wolfson was a complicated man with numerous—and not always compatible—interests and commitments. He was a historian of Western philosophy, a historian of Jewish tradition, a fervent Jew, a troubled Jew. My claim was simply that all these roles had much to do with one another, that the man and his work were of a piece. This Warren Zev Harvey disputes. There was no connection, he maintains, between Wolfson's view of Western philosophy and his view of the Jewish tradition. Neither, he continues, was there any connection between Wolfson's view of Jewish tradition—even of Jewish philosophy—and his personal religious life. The Wolfson depicted by Mr. Harvey's cautious and literal approach is an excessively fragmented and dissociated individual, a self split into discrete moments with nothing to bind them. To my mind such an approach—to any writer or scholar—is a simplistic one.

Wolfson was indeed not writing

a history of Jewish thought—neither, for example, is Gershom Scholem. But just as Scholem's specialized concerns have nourished a more general appraisal of Judaism, so too did Wolfson's essays in Jewish philosophy furnish him with a framework for a broader understanding of the Jewish tradition. Such expansions of a scholar's attitudes are inevitable—certainly for scholars of such stature—and so are the limitations and exaggerations which attend them. This is not to say that Wolfson fabricated a view of Judaism entirely from his work; of course he arrived at his texts with the axioms of Orthodoxy. But instead of divorcing personal presuppositions from scholarly conclusions, as Mr. Harvey proposes, the student would do better to study the influence of the latter upon the former. Does Mr. Harvey really believe that a man can labor fifty years at some of the major sources of his tradition without these labors' affecting his view of it? (Neither I nor Wolfson, incidentally, ever discussed the uniqueness of the Jewish tradition among others; that is a question logically separate from the problem of identifying the tradition itself.)

As for the relation of Wolfson's view of Jewish thought and tradition to his personal behavior, if Wolfson's self-description does not satisfy Mr. Harvey, he might take a closer look at the passage he himself cites. There the nature of Wolfson's interests in Judaism stand clear: instead of the Talmud, "the most promising field of study" in Judaism, Wolfson chooses texts ostensibly less indigenous and already accommodating the pressures of non-Jewish thought and culture. No man chooses his life's work offhandedly or disinterestedly, and there is a great difference between *lernen* and *Wissenschaft*.

What disturbs me most about Mr. Harvey's letter, however, is its tone, in which I detect the faint echoes of a partisan Orthodoxy, and a rush to its defenses. I never charged or accused Wolfson of anything, least of all a lapsed or ambivalent Orthodoxy; in that respect I am not the one to cast the first stone. Nor did I speak of a "new . . . Orthodoxy," whatever that means. What interested me about Wolfson's religious position was rather that it seemed to embody dramatically the predicament of the disenfranchised Orthodox, a group that is now growing. Marshall Sklare—

coincidentally using almost Wolfson's exact words—has labeled such people "the unobservant Orthodox": they are Jews raised in an Orthodox ambience and schooled in its *yeshivot*, who, unable to remain in that world for any number of elevated and not-so-elevated reasons, still know too much about Jewish history and have too much feeling ever to deny Orthodoxy as the touchstone of normative Judaism. For these Jews, Conservative or Reform Judaism will never be meaningful alternatives; they can live neither with nor without the Orthodox community. Wolfson was such a man, and for that reason I was drawn to study him. For that reason too I came to his religious difficulties with nothing but sympathy.

Ragtime & the Critics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Bruce Kovner's "The Ragtime Revival" [Music, March] is a welcome corrective to the chuckle-headed criticism which has accompanied the resurgence of what is, in its own terms, delightful music. Mr. Kovner's brief history of ragtime seems to me to touch upon all the important stages in its development, his necessarily briefer biography of Scott Joplin places him in the proper perspective, and the critical excerpts held up for scrutiny are all too representative. In short, Mr. Kovner is accurate and fair (although I thought I detected two minor errors: I believe Carman Moore is a he, and I think that in listing "The Easy Life" as a Joplin composition, Mr. Kovner has confounded "The Easy Winners" [1901] with "The Strenuous Life" [1902]).

Examples of the kind of critical writing Mr. Kovner skewers in his article could, alas, be multiplied many times over. For example, Gunther Schuller, for whom jazz of the 20's, a body of music far richer than ragtime, is "only . . . a museum relic," managed to compare *Treemonisha*, in an article he wrote for the *New York Times*, with *Götterdämmerung* and Monteverdi's *Orfeo*.

I had hoped that Mr. Kovner would be widely read by music critics who write on ragtime, but such, unfortunately, does not seem to be the case. After "The Ragtime Revival" appeared, the usually intelligent Joseph McLellan of the *Washington Post* greeted the Deutsche

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JEROME S. SHIPMAN
Potomac, Maryland

Mann, Reik & Moses

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward Grossman ["Moses for Moderns," April] could have spared himself the tempting speculation on what Thomas Mann might have been able to do with Moses if he had had the time to try. In fact, he did try. Together with other prominent authors (Franz Werfel, Bruno Frank, Jules Romains, André Maurois, and Sigrid Undset, among others), Mann contributed to a collection of short novels which appeared in 1943 in New York under the title, *The Ten Commandments: Ten Short Novels of Hitler's War Against the Moral Code*. The collection opens with Mann's Moses novel, *Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Before Me*. The German version, simply titled *Das Gesetz* ("The Law"), appeared in Stockholm in 1944. The most outstanding of the German-language reprints, edited with comments and full documentation by Käte Hamburger, is *Thomas Mann: Das Gesetz. Dichtung und Wirklichkeit* (Ullstein Buch No. 5017, 1964).

The above does not diminish but rather adds to my respect for Mr. Grossman as a sensitive critic of Thomas Mann's genius. Mr. Grossman thinks of Moses as "too large, important, serious, intimidating a figure" to have been treated by Thomas Mann with the same narrative technique he applied to his trilogy, *Joseph and His Brothers*. In contrast to his Joseph story, Mann's Moses, to use Käte Hamburger's terminology, turned out to be a "paraphrase" rather than a descriptive novel.

ERWIN ADLER
Seattle, Washington

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In connection with Edward Grossman's discussion of Theodor Reik in "Moses for Moderns," let me share with your readers the following exchange.

On November 21, 1959, Reik wrote to me: "I am flirting with the idea of a book, *Moses the Murderer*. Essential thesis: Moses killed an Egyptian and was killed (see Hosea). The mystery of his death

in the Bible. According to the *lex talionis*: he who sheds blood. . . ."

On November 25, I replied: "I beg of you not to write . . . *Moses the Murderer*, unless you want to make sure that not a single Jew will touch it, let alone read or buy it. The title is horrid, as if Julius Streicher's pen had not dried up yet. First of all, an occasional killing in defense of an innocent person is not murder. You know better than I do that Freud's theory has not been accepted. We must rely on biblical and post-biblical Jewish sources . . . The quotation from Hosea is pure guesswork. In Jewish tradition Moses is known as "Moses our Teacher." . . . We do not call anybody by the epithet "the murderer"; Haman is known as "Haman the wicked"; Antiochus, "the madman." Please reconsider. Do not alienate [y]our own people. . . ."

Reik's answer, dated November 25, 1959: "I have decided to drop the plan of the Moses book, following your advice."

WILLIAM WOLF
Denver, Colorado

"Speciesism"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Marc F. Plattner's review of Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* [Books in Review, March] misses the main points of Singer's book. Singer admits in several places that killing human beings is worse than killing other animals. But he argues that it is speciesist to try "to make the boundary of the right of life run exactly parallel to the boundary of our own species." Animals can enjoy life and suffer and therefore killing them or inflicting pain on them always requires serious justification. Perhaps finding justification comes more easily than Singer supposes, but that does not mean we can dispense with offering it. A speciesist is one who sees no need to bother justifying the use of animals for human purposes beyond merely pointing out that it is for human purposes. Mr. Plattner gives no argument, serious or otherwise, that undermines Singer's view in this matter.

Mr. Plattner further states that Darwin "portrays a world whose essence is an unrelenting competition for survival among the various species—a competition that routinely involves the eating of one animal species by another. The suggestion that, in such a world,

any species should forsake its own 'naked self-interest' to give equal consideration to the interests of other species is preposterous." I don't find it preposterous, but even if it were, Mr. Plattner ignores the fact that Singer devotes a chapter to the claim that it is actually against our interest to eat meat; Singer contends that our interest might be better served by using grain to feed ourselves directly. . . .

Mr. Plattner says that likening the moral status of animals to that of severely brain-damaged infants is "less likely to extend men's moral sympathies to pigs or rats than to weaken the inhibitions that restrain their behavior toward other human beings." But this is only conjecture . . . ; it has no bearing on whether Singer's claim . . . is correct. Shall we denounce a theory as untrue because some people will find ways to abuse it?

Finally, Mr. Plattner does not like the term "speciesist," which he calls "infelicitous." He wishes that Singer had coined another term for the concept, though, in fact, it was not coined by Singer but by Richard Ryder. . . . Singer mentions this in his book . . . and says the term is not euphonious. Perhaps this is what Mr. Plattner means too, but . . . I find the term quite felicitous.

SIDNEY GENDIN
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, Michigan

MARC F. PLATTNER writes:

Sidney Gendin's letter misses the main point of my review. What requires justification is not the use of animals for food, which is the common and legally sanctioned practice of most human communities, but the call for a prohibition of this practice. I believe Peter Singer fails in his attempt to show that men have a moral obligation to refrain from eating animals, and in my review I explained why. Singer bases the case for "animal liberation" not on an upgrading of the moral status of animals, but on a downgrading of the moral status of human beings. Thus, although he intends to show that men owe other animals as much consideration as they owe their fellow men, he winds up undermining any possible basis on which human beings could be required to forgo their own self-interest.

I ignored Singer's argument that vegetarianism could help alleviate world food shortages because he



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himself cautions that it is "quite independent of the question of animal welfare" emphasized in his book. No doubt he realizes that a case for vegetarianism founded solely on human self-interest could also justify the wholesale slaughter of animals that feed on substances edible by human beings.

Based on an "analogy with racism," the term "speciesism" implies that distinctions between species are no more morally relevant than racial differences. Yet as Mr. Gendin himself indicates, not even Singer is really willing to admit this. Thus I find the term "speciesism" wholly misleading and inappropriate. I regret having assigned the dubious honor of coining this word, which is neither felicitous nor euphonious, to Singer rather than to Richard Ryder.

Freud's Jewishness

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Judaism of History" [March] Chaim Raphael remarks: "The Jewishness I mean is no 'literature.' It can be grasped through neither the writing nor the reading of books. . . . It is only lived—and perhaps not even that. One is it." Here is what Sigmund Freud wrote on the same topic. . . . Freud always felt and expressed pride in being Jewish, as in the following excerpt from his preface to the Hebrew translation of *Totem and Taboo* (1913):

No reader of [the Hebrew version of] this book will find it easy to put himself in the emotional position of an author who is ignorant of the language of holy writ, who is completely estranged from the religion of his fathers—as well as from every other religion—and who cannot take a share in nationalist ideas, but who has yet never repudiated his people, who feels that he is in his essential nature a Jew, and who has no desire to alter that nature. If the question were put to him: "Since you have abandoned all these common characteristics of your countrymen, what is there left to you that is Jewish?" he would reply: "A very great deal, and probably its very essence." He could not now express that essence clearly in words; but some day, no doubt, it will become accessible to the scientific mind. Thus it is an experience of a quite special kind for such an author when a book of his is translated into the Hebrew language and put into the hands of

readers for whom the historic idiom is a living tongue; a book, moreover, which deals with the origin of religion and morality, though it adopts no Jewish standpoint and makes no exceptions in favor of Jewry. This author hopes, however, that he will be at one with his readers in the conviction that unprejudiced science cannot remain a stranger to the spirit of the new Jewry.

[Dr.] ROY R. GRINKER, SR.
Department of Psychiatry
Michael Reese Medical Center
Chicago, Illinois

Hemingway and Roethke

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Hemingway said, ". . . but nobody is going to get me into the ring with the Count [Tolstoy] . . ." the very opposite of what Alfred Kazin ["Drink & the American Writer," March] said he said: "Hemingway said that he could beat Tolstoy. . . ."

HERBERT RUHM

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

A few remarks by Alfred Kazin will not mar the poems of Theodore Roethke any more than initials scratched on a pillar will mar the pillar. Who, that looked, could miss the depth, the passions of the flesh and spirit that rose to poetry? And who would deny him the meadow mouse and the lizard? The poems were often easier to love than the man, and he will not be easily dismissed.

JAMES COLE

Laramie, Wyoming

Hamlet

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Two corrections of fact in Jack Richardson's reflections on *Hamlet* and Hamlet ["Alas, Poor Hamlet," Theater, April].

T. S. Eliot was not twenty-five but thirty-one when he published "Hamlet and His Problems" in 1919. And Hamlet, far from being an "adolescent" twenty, as Mr. Richardson hypothesizes, is only one year short of Mr. Eliot's thirty-one. We learn this, and always, I think, with the same feelings of astonishment and perplexity, in the play's last act, where, during the course of Hamlet's exchanges with the Gravediggers, it comes out that the First Gravedigger had begun his trade thirty years before, on

"... the very day that young Hamlet was born. . . ."

DOUGLAS TAYLOR

New York City

JACK RICHARDSON writes:

First, as for Eliot's premature Gerontion: I did not say, as Douglas Taylor believes, that Eliot was twenty-five when he presented his discovery of the objective correlative, merely that he was, at twenty-five, "old." The problem of Hamlet's actual age is more complex, and I admit to preemption on the matter of the Gravedigger's addition. However, it has become a commonplace of scholarship that this tardy introduction of chronological detail has more to do with the age of the actor Burbage than with the character he was playing. The "astonishment and perplexity" Mr. Taylor feels is well grounded and I would say that it is based, as was my interpretation, on the overwhelming behavioral and factual evidence in the play, evidence that, unless we are to believe that Hamlet has spent over a decade at Wittenberg University in a state of wordly arrested development, demands a much younger age for the Prince than that deduced from the Gravedigger's tendentious arithmetic.

Art and the Artist

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Grounds for Samuel Lipman's critique of *Meistersinger's* anti-Semitism [Letters from Readers, April, in a discussion of Mr. Lipman's "Wagner Comes to Broadway," January] lie not in the opera but in Wagner himself. In its most direct and reduced form, Mr. Lipman's argument runs thus: Art cannot exist unless the artist creates, therefore art is the artist; godlike, but fallible, the artist makes art in his own image, for good or evil. More concretely, Wagner was an evil anti-Semite, ergo, his art, or elements of it, are anti-Semitic and evil. Consequently, if we continue to admire *Meistersinger* despite its radically racist, though disguised, significance, we unconsciously risk murder. Mr. Lipman's criticism, reduced to these terms, neither coheres nor compels. To do him justice, though, perhaps he ought to be quoted:

That [Wagner] achieved this miracle of art through investing a character

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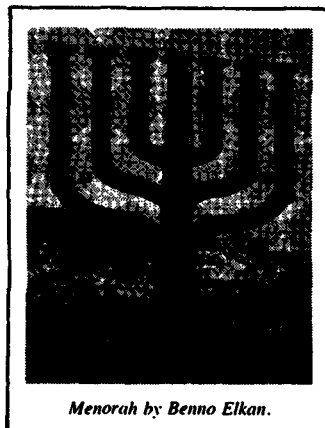
Some arguments you can settle and bets you can win:

- 65 Jewish winners of the Nobel Prize (page 455) and 223 Jews who have won Olympic medals (page 462).
- The Jewish star has sometimes been Christian (page 390).
- Judaism still has priests (page 489).

A general in the Chinese Army who is known to history as "Two Gun Cohen" (page 127). *People you may not think of as Jewish:* Houdini (page 272). Lorne Greene (page 226). Erich von Stroheim (page 575). Victor Borge (page 99).

For people who could use a little help in explaining the difference between the Talmud, Midrash, Mishnah, and Gemara: All the books of the "people of the Book" and what they contain.

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The order of the Passover seder (page 472). *Two ways to don phylacteries* (diagram, page 589).



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3rd-4th century.

with for him despicable Jewish traits is a tragedy for the Jews, and for humanity. But it is not a tragedy for art: art, whether we like it or not, is beyond good and evil. It is because art is fundamentally amoral that we must separate it from life. We must not do that by separating a work of art from its creator, we must do it by separating . . . the fantasies of the artist from the proper goals of social policy. To separate a work of art from its creator is to run the risk of falsifying it. . . .

Not a little rhetoric here. Mr. Lipman's willingness to indulge his comfortable eloquence is probably the cause for his spending so little time really thinking about the problem at hand. *Meistersinger*, he acknowledges, is a "miracle of art," whatever else it may be. He adds that Wagner "achieved it through investing a character with for him despicable Jewish traits." What is meant by the preposition "through"? *Meistersinger* hardly issues from the matrix of Beckmesser; he is necessary, but not nearly sufficient. Another inquiry: were these "traits" despicable to Wagner only? Mr. Lipman does not intend, one hopes, to imply that traits despicable to Wagner are, *eo ipso*, not so to Jews. Again: in precisely what does this "tragedy for the Jews, and for humanity," consist? It would appear that Wagner is to be rendered responsible for more than only the *Meistersingers* of Nuremberg. . . .

The next sentence "*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*" (beyond good and evil) indeed! Neither art nor truth goes to church or synagogue on the Sabbath. This is true, Mr. Lipman admits, "whether we like it or not." But imprecision lurks here as well, for it is evident that not all art is amoral. Has Mr. Lipman ever read Aeschylus, Job, Lucretius, Schiller, or—Wagner? Was ever opera more "moral" than *Meistersinger*? And what of that problematic "fundamentally" in "art is fundamentally amoral"? Could it be that Mr. Lipman was once profoundly deceived and disappointed by art—did he once actually believe that art is obliged to have pretty thoughts, say consoling things, convey heavy, turbulent emotions in a nicely edifying way? Is Wagner to be faulted for not having composed *Fiddler on the Roof*? . . . If amorality in art so repels Mr. Lipman, perhaps he should consider setting, say, Leviticus to music. That would be ex-

tremely moral art, and by a moral artist.

Since art is amoral for Mr. Lipman, it must be sequestered, "separated from life." Under Mr. Lipman's Reich, there will be no amendment guaranteeing free expression, and opera will be more than emended à la Rudel. Strange morality of freedom, this. Assume, for the sake of argument, that Mr. Lipman is a confirmed, righteous heterosexual: what then would be his critical and political posture to "Adelaide" or the choral ode to love in *Antigone* once he learned that Beethoven and Sophocles just might have been homosexual? . . .

Mr. Lipman really is too discerning and thoughtful a man not to recognize that an artist's life, and his ideas about his art, are actually things apart from that art itself. His life and ideas may not be beyond good and evil, but even Mr. Lipman admits his art is. Does that not point to an inherent distinction?

In fact, one "falsifies the work of art" only when one assumes the umbilical cord between artist and artwork is not cut immediately at the instant of creation, of completion. Art stands on its own, as does the artist, and each falls, or remains standing, on its own.

All of which suffices to show that Beckmesser can never be understood as anything but what in fact he is in *Meistersinger*—an unlovable, unloving, spiritually impotent man. Wagner, in his sad fallibility, associated such qualities with Jews: if that was anyone's tragedy, it was Wagner's. . . .

But to return to Mr. Lipman. His critical approach does not satisfy. He requires that an opera, that any art, not be comprehended on its own terms. He would profess that art is not known until one knows the artist. This, again, is a pretty and polished proposition, but it is not quite true. For if, as he insists, art and artist are inseparable, does it not then follow by concrete analogy that *Mein Leben* should be published and read with the same frequency as *Meistersinger* is produced and heard? But we know this is not the case. The evidence indicates that Wagner, man and artist, is not identical with, is something less than inseparable from, the "miraculous" art Wagner made. . . . Mr. Lipman's erudition alone ought to have enabled him to perceive, as he himself urges, that indeed "we must separate art from life"—but

rather more effectively than he has managed. . . .

PATRICK HANNON
New Haven, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I must warmly thank Samuel Lipman for calling to my attention Robert Gutman's indispensable book, *Richard Wagner*. It is the first full-length biography to my knowledge to portray Wagner convincingly as no mere "ordinary" anti-Semite who more or less passively reflected both the radical and reactionary aspects of 19th-century anti-Semitism, but as a man who was paranoiacally obsessed with Jew-hatred throughout his life and much of whose music and socio-political writings were fused into a psychological unity in the doctrines of Aryan racial superiority and Jewish defilement and corruption—doctrines which bore their bitter fruit in the 20th century.

This said, the Gutman book does not support Mr. Lipman's extreme thesis that *Meistersinger* is filled with anti-Semitic "poison" concentrated in the person of Beckmesser who "must be presented as a villain, not only personally but socially, not only individually but as a symbol of the crime of the Jews against the people." Perhaps that is why Mr. Lipman cited Gutman only on the point of Sachs's character, whereas the central issue Mr. Lipman poses is the character of Beckmesser.

In fact, writing of Beckmesser, Gutman makes the opposite point: "Because of his [Wagner's] reputation in this area [his well-known anti-Semitism], at times evil was suspected even when he intended none." The reference here is to the fact that Wagner's contemporaries knew that Beckmesser was intended to represent the hostile critic Hanslick whose mother was Jewish.

To Gutman, the deeper meaning of the *Meistersinger*, underlying the comic opera/love story setting in medieval Nuremberg, was Wagner's own resolution of the opposition between traditional music with its pedantic formal structure (represented by Beckmesser-Hanslick) and spontaneous musical innovation (represented by Walther) and their reconciliation by the wise Hans Sachs (Wagner). That Hanslick was half-Jewish, of course, gave added spice. . . . Here, Wagner was primarily interested in advancing his musical, not his socio-political, ideas.

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I think it is fair to say that on the whole Gutman exculpates *Rienzi*, *Der Fliegende Hollaender*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and *Meistersinger* from Wagner's obsession with anti-Semitism and Nordic superiority. Mr. Lipman just chose the wrong opera.

This brings me to my next question concerning Mr. Lipman's article and his reply. Why did he single out the New York City Opera production of *Meistersinger*? Aside from artistic considerations about which one can argue, by the criterion of Mr. Lipman's chosen thesis in what way does it differ from any other production he could name—including the current Metropolitan Opera production? As Julius Rudel has tellingly pointed out, even in Hitler's Germany Beckmesser was never portrayed as a hated Jewish symbol. Mr. Lipman has utterly failed to deal with this crucial issue.

My final point is an ironic one. Having stirred up a storm, Mr. Lipman tamely and anti-climactically concludes that, after all, "art is beyond good and evil," and Wagner's operas are "a tragedy for the Jews and for humanity . . . but . . . not for art." So, sit back and enjoy *Meistersinger* for its "beauty" notwithstanding its allegedly evil message. On this issue of principle, I and many others would prefer to stand on the ground of Socrates and Thomas Mann: the aesthetic cannot be separated from the ethical ("Phaedrus," "Death in Venice")—to be indifferent to the ethical because of the lure of beauty is to fall "into the bottomless pit." Fortunately, *Meistersinger* does not confront us with this dilemma.

There is legitimate room for differences of opinion and for the free play of the critic's imagination but, to avoid eternal damnation, are we to be compelled to accept Mr. Lipman's "*Credo quia absurdum est*" ("I believe because it is absurd")?

ELIAS M. SCHWARZBART
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Contrary to Samuel Lipman's final facetious sentence in his reply to my letter, we do not come "close to agreement" on anything except for his earlier statement that *Meistersinger* was a "pinnacle of the City Opera's achievement."

I will not try your reader's patience by a go at Mr. Lipman's "rebuttal" except to point out the fact that the cut at the end of the opera

does not go, as he states, from C dominant seventh to C major—I don't know where he heard that—but presents the normal cadential progression of d seventh to G seventh to C major.

JULIUS RUDEL
New York City Opera
New York City

SAMUEL LIPMAN writes:

The major issue raised in Patrick Hannon's and Elias M. Schwarzbart's letters is the possibility and the desirability of separating an artist's work from his life. Mr. Hannon would make this separation into an absolute to be followed completely and in all cases; Mr. Schwarzbart would only preserve *Meistersinger* from that association with Richard Wagner's life which he seems willing to grant cannot be avoided with the master's other compositions. I would be perhaps more hopeful about the viability of this separation of art from the artist if it did not seem so difficult, as it evidently is for Mr. Hannon, to separate criticism from the critic.

I find something artificial about this separation of art from the artist. Contrary to what might be thought, this attempt is by no means made—or even considered a possibility—in all the cases in which art is evaluated. It does not arise in those cases where the art is incontestably great and the artist thoroughly fulfills our highest moral expectations; the universally made connection between Beethoven's politics and the *Eroica* Symphony comes immediately to mind as only one example of the art proving the life and the life proving the art. Similarly, where the art is bad and the artist evil—as in the case of Nazi architecture—the defects of the art are seen as intimately related to the villainy of the artist. And where the art is bad or ephemeral, but the artist's life is popularly seen as noble—as in the case of Lillian Hellman—the art is conveniently forgotten and the artist writes highly acclaimed memoirs. Nor is there any problem when we know nothing, or because of lack of interest care nothing, about the artist's life.

The real problem arises when, precisely as with Wagner, the art is imperishable and the artist a seeming monster, or at the minimum, a creature of unworthy passions. These cases are rare, at least where such a disparity between the value of the art and the sins of the

life is concerned. So here an attempt must be made to "save the phenomena," as was made in ancient astronomy to preserve an earth-centered universe through the device of the epicycle. To preserve the art from the verdict on the artist, an *ad hoc* theory must be brought in—the separation of art from the artist. But the cost is that the art loses some of its constituent elements. How unsatisfactory this theory seems in an age of Freud and Marx is clear from its most elegant and thoroughgoing presentation, in T. S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent":

. . . the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material.

It is impossible not to feel the curious hollowness of this statement when it is applied to Eliot's own poetry.

Why make this attempt at separation at all? Does not the greatness of *Meistersinger*, for instance, remain when every unseemly detail of its genesis in the composer's life is brought in? Since we all know that evil exists in the world, can we not face the fact that some of it creeps into art? Once we get past the childish expectation that art must be a model for life, we begin to see that art becomes greater when, in its capacity as a rival to life, it contains all of life's elements. *Fiddler on the Roof* indeed!

There seems little doubt that much of the richness of art would be lost from the kind of sterile consideration which Mr. Hannon urges. He raises the question of art written by possible homosexuals; certainly in the case of perhaps the greatest example of homosexual art, Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, the author's moral condemnation of, as well as the amount of time devoted to, homosexuality can perhaps best be placed in context by the facts of Proust's own life. How strange that Mr. Hannon, because I wish to bring all possible details to bear upon my criticism of a work of art, and because I wish the *entire* work to be performed and evaluated, should accuse me of censorship.

I am not sure of the point Mr. Hannon makes when he writes: "Mr. Lipman does not intend, one hopes, to imply that traits despica-

ble to Wagner are, *eo ipso*, not so to Jews." The problem here is that though Wagner, as Mr. Hannon agrees, did associate the traits he assigned to Beckmesser with Jews, he was not alone in so doing. Much anti-Semitism is based upon finding these traits—dry legalism (often called Talmudism), acquisitiveness (often called capitalism), and creative impotence (often considered the artistic result of rootless cosmopolitanism)—specifically Jewish. But not only are these traits universally human rather than distinctively Jewish; if differently treated they might even seem virtues. Talmudism is also respect for the law and the book; capitalism has brought about hitherto undreamed of human material progress; and "rootless cosmopolitanism" can be seen as membership in the large community of man. It is not primarily Beckmesser's traits that, considered objectively, are despicable. It is Wagner's treatment of those traits that incline us to hate Beckmesser as Wagner wished us to hate him. What Wagner hated was not Beckmesser's supposedly Jewish traits; it was Beckmesser himself—to Wagner a symbol of the Jews who, in the person of Hanslick (and Meyerbeer before him), stood, or so Wagner thought, in his way. For Wagner as for many other anti-Semites, first came the hatred and then the justificatory identification and distortion of traits.

If the general theory of separation fails, so does Mr. Schwarzbart's attempt, through quotation from Robert Gutman, to exempt *Meistersinger* from that interaction with Wagner's life which Mr. Schwarzbart otherwise admits. Perhaps in justice to Gutman the sentence quoted by Mr. Schwarzbart should be given here along with the two

sentences immediately following it:

Because of his reputation in this area, at times evil was suspected even when he intended none. Beckmesser's serenade was hissed at the Vienna premiere of *Meistersinger* in February 1870; the song was wrongly believed to parody synagogue chant. But the incident underscores how clearly Wagner's contemporaries judged just *what* his Marker was intended to represent [emphasis added].

Gutman says correctly that the serenade is not intended to parody synagogue chant. But the serenade is an expression, as I have tried to show, of Wagner's contempt for Yiddish and the way in which he thought Jews talked German. As for Wagner's attacking Hanslick as a Jew through Beckmesser, Gutman writes:

It is sad to observe a genius descending to the level on which Wagner chose to engage Hanslick. Of course the reason for this critic's obstinacy and wickedness was discovered. He was a Jew . . .

Mr. Schwarzbart asks why in the past Beckmesser was not portrayed overtly as a Jewish symbol. The answer is of course that in German-speaking countries it was—as Gutman indicates—not necessary to have an overt presentation in order to communicate the message. Or, as Michael Meyer puts it in the October 1975 issue of the *Journal of Contemporary History*:

It was evident to contemporaries, as to the Nazis, that the money-hungry and lustful Alberich, treacherous Mime, and the impotent critic Hanslick-Beckmesser were all carica-

tures of Jews, intended to recall traditional German anti-Semitism.

And as for the prevailing German perception of the significance of *Meistersinger*, one need do no more than quote from Marcel Prawy's recent history of the Vienna Opera:

Hitler's first birthday in the new "Gros-Deutschland" era was celebrated by the Vienna Opera on April 20, 1938 with a performance (needless to say) of *Die Meistersinger*, conducted by Fürtwangler.

There remains to be discussed Mr. Hannon's disagreement with my calling art fundamentally amoral. Mr. Hannon seems to feel that in saying this I implied that art does not deal with moral subjects or expound a set of moral values. Of course works of art often take a moral position, but they are not to be judged on that basis. Art is amoral in that it demands evaluation as art, and in that once it succeeds on artistic grounds, other considerations tend to become irrelevant. One may demand of art that it adhere to one's own morality, but to do so is to open the door to totalitarian control of art. And to believe that great art is of necessity moral is to open oneself to social damage from the fantasies of the artist.

I am, finally, happy to acknowledge that I was one bar off on the beginning of Mr. Rudel's cut, and that his analysis of the harmonies, and not mine, was therefore correct. I am also happy to state for the record that the City Opera cut, grievous as it seemed to me, amounted to less than half of Sachs's final passage; in this season's Metropolitan Opera production, the cut amounted to three-quarters. Shame!

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The Abandonment of Israel

Norman Podhoretz

WHEN, about a year ago, the United Nations declared that Zionism was a form of racism, a measure of comfort for the state of Israel and its supporters could be found in the fact that an impressive degree of opposition was mounted to this "obscene" idea—as the American representative called it—both within the General Assembly itself and in the world outside. At Mexico City in 1975, where the same resolution was first introduced, it was approved with only two opposing votes: that of Israel and that of the United States. Then, at meetings of the OAU in Kampala and of the Group of 77 at Lima (in which neither the United States nor Israel could participate), it was introduced again and passed with no opposition at all. This time, at the UN, Israel and the United States were joined by thirty-three other nations in voting against the resolution, while another thirty-two abstained, leaving its sponsors with a majority but nothing remotely approaching the overwhelming endorsement to which they had by now become accustomed. This time too there were protests from private groups, especially within the United States, where much outrage against the resolution was expressed and virtually no support. Indeed, so great did the revulsion against the resolution appear that in the opinion of the British ambassador to the UN, the net result was a victory for Israel rather than a defeat.

If, however, the Zionism-racism resolution was a victory for the Israelis, it was a victory of the type of which they might with perfect precision have said: One more such and we are undone. Certainly the response to the resolution revealed that Israel was not entirely isolated. But on closer inspection it revealed a deterioration in Israel's position which went much deeper than the gross voting statistics or the mere volume of public protest by themselves could even begin to suggest.

In order to appreciate the extent of that deterioration, it is necessary to bear in mind what the Zionism-racism resolution said about the state of Israel. The resolution did not merely condemn the state of Israel for alleged crimes against the Pales-

tinians, or for discriminating against its own Arab citizens. What the resolution did was to denounce the state of Israel itself as an illegitimate entity. The very idea of a sovereign Jewish state in the Middle East (Zionism), let alone the actuality of one, no matter what its boundaries might be, was by *definition* declared criminal (racist). In the eyes of this resolution, Israel could only cease to be criminal if it ceased to be both Jewish and sovereign—if, in other words, it ceased to exist. Returning to the boundaries of 1967 or even the boundaries of 1948 would make not the slightest difference. For the resolution did not concern boundaries or occupied territories; it concerned the right of a sovereign Jewish state of *any* size or shape to exist in the Middle East.

From Israel's point of view, it was bad enough that a majority of the member-states of the United Nations—under whose auspices the state of Israel had come into being in the first place—when asked whether a sovereign Jewish state had the right to exist in the Middle East, should have answered No. Yet the manner in which most of the member-states who answered Yes to this question chose to do so was in its own way almost as bad. The United States argued vehemently that the resolution was wrong in principle, that it was based on a perversion of language and a distortion of the historical record. But no more than two or three of the other countries who either voted against the resolution or abstained (Costa Rica and Barbados come to mind) acted on any such principled basis. One after another the delegates who had been instructed by their governments to oppose or abstain rose to the rostrum to make speeches "in explanation of vote"; and one after another they argued not that the resolution was wrong but that it was politically unwise. Far from defending Israel, moreover, most of the countries that refused to endorse the resolution went out of their way to assure the world that they yielded to no one in their disapproval and indeed detestation of Israel's many crimes. In effect, while they were not prepared to go so far as to say that Israel had no right to exist, neither were they quite prepared to affirm unequivocally that Israel did have a right to exist.

For all practical purposes, then, the United States remained Israel's only real defender. If the

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United States had not spoken out so forcefully in defense of Israel, there would in all probability have been no country to speak out in defense of Israel but Israel itself. Yet forceful as the American support for Israel was in the case of the Zionism-racism resolution, it held only cold comfort for Israel. The reason is that while the United States would unquestionably have opposed such a resolution under any circumstances, it is by no means clear that the opposition would have been as passionate or as effective if anyone but Daniel P. Moynihan had been the American representative at the time. The strong language in which Moynihan denounced the resolution and the tactics he used in lobbying against it originated with him and not in Washington, and they were tolerated rather than enthusiastically endorsed by his superiors in the State Department. Consequently, if not for the accident of Moynihan's presence in the UN when the issue arose, the resolution might well have passed without serious principled opposition and by a margin approaching the near-unanimity achieved by the Arabs at Lima, Kampala, and Mexico City.*

IN SHORT, Moynihan's behavior, far from being an accurate barometer of American policy toward Israel in general, was—and in retrospect looks more and more like—an aberration in an otherwise consistent pattern of weakening American support for the Israeli position. Officially, of course, the United States continues to affirm its commitment to Israel, and not merely in words. American military aid continues to be supplied to the Israelis in greater quantities than ever, and American votes continue to be cast in the Security Council, in the Human Rights Commission, in UNESCO, in the International Labor Organization, and in the World Health Organization against the endless parade of resolutions condemning Israel and all its works. At the same time, however, everyone senses the presence of powerful undercurrents pulling in the other direction. In the UN, Moynihan's "lectures on democracy and decency"—as, according to the *New York Times*, they are scornfully called by "several diplomats" of unspecified nationality—have given way to the "courtesy and restraint" of William Scranton. "Arab diplomats," the *Times* reports, "lauded what they said was a new 'tone' that Mr. Scranton had introduced in the Middle East debates." And indeed there was a new tone. In the Security Council, in his very first statement as the American ambassador, Scranton praised Jamil M. Baroodi of Saudi Arabia for his "inimitable wit and remarkable eloquence and, most important of all and truly and seriously, his very extraordinary knowledge of history." This was just after Baroodi had demonstrated "his very extraordinary knowledge of history" by asserting, among other things, that the Zionists had forced Woodrow Wilson into World War I. Baroodi then proceeded to put his

"inimitable wit and remarkable eloquence" on full display the next day in a speech to the Security Council declaring that *The Diary of Anne Frank* was a forgery and that the Holocaust would some day be exposed as a myth "just as it came out that the Germans did not eat babies when they invaded Belgium in World War I."

The ebbing of political and ideological support so evident in the UN since the departure of Moynihan is matched by a weakening of support in other areas as well. There was a period when few difficulties, if any, seemed to attend the matter of military aid to Israel. Nowadays questions always seem to be raised as to whether the Israelis will get the kinds of weapons they need and as many of them as they need. Anxieties are also aroused by the new cordiality of the United States toward several Arab governments—a cordiality which has already been translated both into the shipment of arms to these governments and into the exertion of pressures on Israel, which grow more and more open with every passing month, to withdraw from the territories occupied in the 1967 war.

In itself this demand for an Israeli withdrawal constitutes nothing new. Even Lyndon Johnson, whose administration represented perhaps the high point of American sympathy for Israel, said that while the United States supported Israel's existence, it did not and could not endorse Israel's conquests in the Six-Day War. But the Johnson administration took the position that the occupied territories were to be returned—and only to be returned—as part of a settlement which would entail recognition of Israel's existence by the Arab countries and direct negotiations among the parties to fix the precise boundaries of the now-recognized state in such a way as to insure its future security. In essence this was also the position taken by the Security Council in Resolution 242. The Israelis were to give up the territories, and the Arabs were to give up their efforts to destroy the state of Israel. The Israelis would move physically and the Arabs would move politically. According to Lord Caradon of Great Britain, who was the chief draftsman of Resolution 242, what it envisaged was "a package deal." The resolution was "a balanced whole." There was to be a *quid* and there was to be a *quo*. Until the Arabs moved politically, the Israelis were under no obligation to move physically. This was what Resolution 242 said, and it was the basis of American policy as well—at least until the election of Richard Nixon.

* The contrast between these earlier votes and the one in the General Assembly obviously disposes of the often-repeated charge that Moynihan's tactics "made things worse" for Israel. The truth is that as a result of those tactics, opposition to the resolution grew as it passed through the parliamentary process on its way to final approval. In the Third Committee, where it was first introduced, the opposing vote (negatives plus abstentions) was 56; in the next stage (a vote to postpone), opposition increased to 61; and in the vote in the General Assembly itself, it rose to 67.

One of the first things Nixon did upon being elected President was to send William Scranton on a mission to the Middle East in the course of which Scranton—the same William Scranton who, perhaps significantly, was later chosen to succeed Moynihan as American ambassador to the UN—announced that American policy would henceforth be more “evenhanded”; and the same theme was subsequently stressed by Nixon’s first Secretary of State, in the so-called Rogers Plan. Yet in view of the fact that nothing could have been more evenhanded than official American policy had already been since 1967, the Israelis and their friends could be forgiven for wondering whether the term might not be a euphemism for, precisely, a move away from evenhandedness and toward an entirely different policy altogether.

By now, it would be hard to deny that these apprehensions were justified. But until the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, nothing significant occurred to substantiate the idea that a change in American policy was either being planned or was actually taking place. Since the Yom Kippur War, however, the difference between the old evenhandedness and the new has come more and more clearly into focus.

As Theodore Draper describes it: “The old concept used to be that there could be no peace in the Middle East unless Israelis and Arabs came to terms with each other,” whereas the new policy “has tended to interpose the United States between Israel and the Arabs.” That is, the United States has undertaken to do for the Arabs what the Arabs have been unable to do for themselves: force Israel to surrender the territories. But the United States has not undertaken to force the Arabs to accept the existence of a sovereign and secure Jewish state in the Middle East in return for those territories. Instead of insisting in truly evenhanded fashion on a *quid pro quo* from the Arabs, the new American approach is to compensate the Israelis for the absence of any reciprocal concessions on the part of the Arabs themselves. For example (to quote Draper again): “If a return to the pre-1967 boundaries decreases Israeli security, the United States considers making up the difference with an American or American-plus guarantee. If Israel surrenders the Abu Rodeis oil field in the Sinai, let the United States arrange to get an equivalent amount of oil from Iran.”

The former Secretary of Defense, James R. Schlesinger, seeking a more accurate name than “evenhandedness” for an approach involving pressures by the United States on a reluctant ally to make unilateral concessions in the face of a deadly enemy, and in exchange only for promises of compensatory American support, recently characterized the new American policy as “the Vietnamization of Israel.” In using this term, of course, Schlesinger was thinking not of the process through which the United States got into Vietnam but of the way in which we got out.

Two different explanations have been advanced for this shift from the old policy of evenhandedness to the new policy of “Vietnamization.” According to the first and more widely accepted view, the primary objective of the United States is to insure an uninterrupted flow of oil to itself and its allies in Western Europe and Japan, and this can best be accomplished by in effect bribing the Arabs with vigorous political support—a policy carrying the further advantage of increasing American influence in the Arab world at the expense of the Soviet Union. According to the second view, the primary objective of the United States is not to step up its competition with the Soviet Union, but on the contrary to avoid any future confrontation with Soviet power, and this can best be accomplished by a gradual contraction of the American involvement in such regions of potential conflict as the Middle East.

So far as Israel is concerned, however, it scarcely matters—at least in the short run, which in the case of so precariously situated a country may be all the run that is relevant—whether the first explanation is correct or the second. If oil and the displacement of Soviet influence are now the keys to American policy, they clearly seem to dictate American pressures on Israel to make territorial and eventually other concessions involving the PLO without commensurate concessions from the Arabs. (For why should the Arabs make commensurate concessions if no one is forcing them to do so?) Yet even if the overriding imperative of American policy is not to enter into serious competition with the Soviet Union for influence in the Arab world but rather to avoid the danger of serious conflict with an increasingly powerful and increasingly expansionist Soviet Union, one-sided pressures on Israel to accept a “peaceful” settlement would still be required in order to set the stage for an “honorable” American withdrawal from the area. This was what the United States did toward the end in Vietnam, and it may well be—as James Schlesinger for one appears to suggest—what the United States is preparing to do in the Middle East.

Is Israel then to be abandoned? Henry Kissinger thinks not. It would, he once said, be an act of “extraordinary cynicism” for the United States to “negotiate over the survival of Israel”—that is, to bargain the existence of Israel away for the sake of oil or détente or any other objective. Neither the United States, he predicted, nor “in the last analysis Europe” would ever do such a thing. Of course nations (the United States itself supplying one of the most recent examples) have behaved with just such “extraordinary cynicism” throughout history. Why then is Kissinger so confident that Israel represents a limiting case? Perhaps because he thinks that guilt over the Holocaust is still a potent enough factor to prevent the Western world from acquiescing once again, let alone conniving, in the destruction of an entire Jewish community. If so,

he has failed to notice that the statute of limitations has, as it were, run out on the Holocaust by now.

It is true that for many people old enough to have fought against the Nazis in World War II, any threat to the physical security of Jews as Jews—which today of course means Israel—remains anathema. This explains why a figure like Jean-Paul Sartre, whose general political stance would naturally incline him toward support of the Arabs and especially of the PLO, continues to side with Israel. It also explains why the West European governments, all of which are run by members of the World War II generation, have not yet deserted Israel entirely despite their almost total dependence on Middle Eastern oil. (They all, for example, voted against the Zionism-racism resolution; and while they have all moved a considerable distance since then toward the Arab position on the PLO and on various indictments of Israel in the Security Council and other UN agencies, they are, the *New York Times* says, still resisting “Arab demands that [they] adopt stronger anti-Israel policies in exchange for economic ties.”)

Nevertheless, it is also true that the memory of World War II has been growing dim even for those who lived through it. And for those too young to have been marked by the experience of Nazism, Israel has for some time looked more like a nation of conquerors than like a nation of survivors. Since 1967, indeed, the anti-Israel propaganda emanating from both the Soviet Union and from the Arab world has portrayed the Israelis as the new Nazis and the Palestinians as the new Jews. Shortly after the Six-Day War cartoons were published depicting Moshe Dayan as Rommel, with swastikas on his uniform (and as an added fillip dollar-signs for eyes). More recently, there was the condemnation of Israel by UNESCO for crimes against culture—a charge meant to conjure up the burning of books by the Nazis—and more recently still the Soviet ambassador to the UN accused the Israelis of “racial genocide,” while the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (which was created by a General Assembly resolution passed on the very same day as the Zionism-racism resolution) compared “the sealing of a part of the city of Nablus” by the Israelis after a series of riots had broken out there to “the ghettos and concentration camps erected by the Hitlerites in several cities of Europe.”

In one form or another this theme has struck a responsive chord throughout the Western world (the caricature of Dayan as Rommel was even published in the newsletter of SNCC, one of the most prominent of the radical civil-rights organizations of the mid-60's). And despite the new “even-handedness” of American policy, an even greater success has been enjoyed by the idea that Israel is the spearhead of American imperialism in the Middle East (the dollar-signs in Dayan's eyes). But the greatest success of all has been scored by the

newest twist in Arab-Soviet propaganda, which is to portray the Jews of Israel (half of whose population actually stems from the Arab countries themselves—from North Africa and the Middle East) as a community of European *colons* and the Palestinians as a dark-skinned native population fighting for its natural rights. It was these two ideas—the Israelis as Nazis and the Israelis as white imperialists—which were brought together with such brazen neatness in the identification of Zionism with racism.

To the extent that some such version of the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict is accepted, the dissolution of the state of Israel, whether by force or by political means, will seem not an act of “extraordinary cynicism” but an act of historic justice. And this, to judge by the debate over the Zionism-racism resolution and the unrelenting ideological offensive which has followed, is how it already seems to many people in many countries. Some of these people live in countries which voted against the resolution for one set of political reasons or another, and they even include a number of American Jews who think that a Jewish state has no right to exist unless it conforms in every detail to the dictates of the contemporary liberal conscience.

NOT only, then, is the memory of the Holocaust ceasing to serve as a barrier against the ultimate betrayal of Israel. It even seems powerless to prevent the emergence of a new anti-Semitism especially tailored to the reappearance after so many centuries of a Jewish state in the world. There is a reluctance among some of Israel's friends to describe the hostility to Israel in certain circles as anti-Semitic—a reluctance based on the desire to see the Arab-Israeli conflict as a conventional international dispute amenable to resolution by conventional diplomatic means. Certainly a good part of that conflict does partake of the character of a conventional dispute. But the conclusion seems unavoidable by now that anti-Semitism has also entered the picture to an appreciable degree. For what other epithet can reasonably be applied to a current of opinion which singles out the Jews as the only people in the world who are not entitled to otherwise universally acknowledged rights? All other peoples are entitled to national self-determination; when the Jews exercise this right, they are committing the crimes of racism and imperialism. All other nations are entitled to defend themselves against armed attack; when a Jewish nation defends itself, it is committing the crime of aggression. Of the estimated thirty-five million refugees who have been displaced by war and other calamities since 1945 alone, only the three-quarters of a million displaced in the Jewish war of national liberation are expected to be repatriated. Quoting the Rev. Dr. Douglas Young, President of the American Institute of Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem, who points out

that this demand runs "contrary to *all* treatment of *all* refugees through the *whole* world in the last ten or more years," Theodore Draper comments: "There is something suspicious and ominous about a world which permits one rule for refugees from a Jewish state and another rule for refugees from all other kinds of states."

Draper also quotes former Senator Fulbright on the issue of the territories conquered by Israel in 1967 which, of the many millions of square miles of territory conquered during the past thirty-five years alone, are the only ones which are expected to be returned. Fulbright said: "It is natural enough for Israel to resist the honor of being the first modern military victor to be obliged to abide by the principles and specifications of the United Nations Charter, especially when the greater powers who dominate the Security Council have set such a wretched example. Be that as it may, the principle is too important to be cast away because of the hypocrisy or self-interest of its proponents." To which Draper replies: "In short, all the self-interested hypocrites have a right to ask of Israel what they would not dream of doing themselves."

Another thing all the self-interested hypocrites would not dream of doing themselves but have a right to ask Israel to do is break off relations with South Africa. Almost every country in the world—including Arab and Black African countries—does business with South Africa. When Israel does business with South Africa, this means that there is a "Tel Aviv-Pretoria Axis" (the term axis calculated to associate Israel again with Nazism).

In addition to singling out the Jewish state as uniquely illegitimate, and in addition to branding the things it does in common with all other states as uniquely criminal, this current of opinion exposes its anti-Semitic character in a compulsive propagation of precisely the kind of "big lie" in which Hitler himself specialized. Thus Israel—the only democratic society in the Middle East, the only one in which the press is free and speech is free, and the only one in which minorities of every kind, ethnic, religious, and political, enjoy civil and political liberties—is condemned for violations of human rights by tyrannical and barbarous regimes in which there is no freedom of speech or of the press, in which no political opposition is permitted, and in which minorities are systematically persecuted. The PLO, to be sure, claims to be different; it speaks of an intention to found a "secular democratic state." But there is no reason to suppose that the state which an organization of radical Arabs means to establish would be any more secular or any more democratic than the nineteen Arab states already in existence. Every one of these states (including those, like Syria and Iraq, which are ruled by parties of the Left) makes Islam the official religion, and not a single one of them is democratic in any intelligible sense of that word.

To represent the conflict between such regimes and a country like Israel as a struggle of oppressed Third World peoples against Nazi-like aggressors is a stunning inversion of the truth. But it is also a testimony to the persisting vitality of anti-Semitism which, expelled more or less successfully from domestic society in the countries where once it flourished, now reappears, suitably translated into the current language and modalities of international life, to deal with the phenomenon of a Jewish state among other states as it once dealt with Jewish individuals and communities living in states dominated by other religious or ethnic groups.

An additional bonus of the "big lie" in this case is that it undermines the other basis on which the abandonment of Israel by the Western democracies and the United States in particular might be considered an act of "extraordinary cynicism": the fact that Israel is a democratic country. To some extent, at least—and perhaps to a greater extent than toughminded analysts think—the American commitment to Israel has rested on and been strengthened by this fact. Public-opinion polls indeed have shown that the reason most Americans are sympathetic to Israel is not that it is a Jewish state but that it is "a small democratic country which is trying to preserve its independence" against heavy odds and against the hostility of the Soviet Union. Schlesinger expresses a similar sentiment when he asks: If the United States will not defend a democratic country like Israel, whom will we defend? Obviously, then, if democracy in Israel can be "exposed" as fraudulent, abandoning our commitment to the Israelis becomes easier and all the more thinkable.

MOST people in the Western countries, to be sure, remain unpersuaded by the portrayal of the Israelis as Nazis or racist imperialists, or the concomitant transmutation of the Arab states into victims of aggression and the PLO into fighters for freedom and democracy. Yet even in the minds of many of the unpersuaded, the moral burden has now been placed on the Israelis who are challenged to prove that they are *not* guilty of all "the affronts to humanity" with which the Arabs, as usual using language reminiscent of the indictments drawn up against the Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg, keep charging them in various agencies of the UN: "mass arrests," "confiscation and appropriation," "ill-treatment, deportation, expulsion, displacement and transfer of . . . inhabitants," and so on. Not surprisingly, some of the mud has stuck. At a recent conference of American intellectuals convoked to discuss measures which might be taken against the expulsion of Israel from UNESCO, for example, many of the participants were so anxious to dissociate themselves from Israel's "policies" that they scarcely found time to deal with the subject the meeting

had been called to consider, which was the outrage committed by UNESCO *against* Israel.

More generally, and in consonance with this spirit, a new understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict has lately taken hold which makes it possible for many people in the United States and Europe to encourage exactly what Kissinger was once so certain neither the United States nor Europe would ever do—"negotiate over the survival of Israel," and to believe themselves to be acting, moreover, not out of "extraordinary cynicism" but with a clear and perfect conscience.

Unlike the thinking behind phenomena like the Zionism-racism resolution, this new understanding has nothing to do with anti-Semitism. It is based, rather, on the premise that the major obstacle to a peaceful settlement in the Middle East is not the refusal of the Arabs to accept the existence of a sovereign Jewish state in their midst, but the "intransigence" of the Israelis. Although the Arabs, in this view, may once have entertained the hope of overrunning the state of Israel and driving its Jewish inhabitants into the sea, and although there are still extremists among them who continue to dream such dreams, moderates who are at least willing to tolerate if not embrace the state of Israel have been gaining the upper hand in the major "confrontation states," and even within the PLO. What these new Arab leaders want is the return of the territories captured by Israel in the Six-Day War and the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza under the moderate leadership of Yassir Arafat. If—the argument concludes—Israel agrees to this, the Arabs will live in peace with Israel.

Hence, in this new interpretation, Israel's refusal to surrender the occupied territories and to recognize the PLO is now the only obstacle standing in the way of a resolution of the conflict in the Middle East. Pressuring the Israelis is therefore not merely good for the Arabs or for the United States; it is also good for Israel. Far from being an expression of cynicism, such one-sided pressures are a favor to Israel, a way of saving the Israelis from their own most short-sighted instincts.

THIS, roughly, is Kissinger's own view of the situation; it is the view of the State Department; and it is evidently the view of the White House as well. It is the view of an ever larger number of Congressmen and Senators, including several who have in the past seemed very friendly toward Israel. ("In the first of a series of hearings on Middle East policy," the *Washington Post* reported a few weeks ago, "Senator Javits and others who recently visited the area . . . described Arab leaders as relatively flexible on crucial points of an eventual agreement in the area, including the right of Israel to exist. But most of the Senators described Israeli leaders as intransigent in their approach to an agreement.") The same view is prevalent within the Council on Foreign Rela-

tions and other institutions of what used to be called the foreign-policy establishment. It is also the view most often expressed or reflected nowadays in the national press, from the *New York Times* to *Time*, from *Newsweek* to the *Washington Post*. And it is the view of that increasingly vocal and increasingly visible fraction of the American Jewish community to whom support of Israel is conditional on Israel's good behavior as measured by the liberal pieties in fashion on any given day.

When one considers that the literal survival of Israel may very well ride on the issue, one is bound to be astonished and even flabbergasted at the thinness of the evidence which so many people have taken as proving that the Arabs are finally ready to accept the existence of a sovereign Jewish state in their midst and to desist from any future effort to wipe it out. The best that can be said for this evidence is that it is ambiguous and inconclusive. Sadat has made statements in English or French for Western consumption suggesting or hinting—never declaring unequivocally—that he is now willing to live in some peaceful or at least non-belligerent arrangement with a sovereign Jewish state. Yet for every such statement, he has made another (or is it ten others?) in Arabic, and sometimes even in English or French, pledging never to settle for anything less than the "rights" of the Palestinians as defined in the PLO charter; and the PLO charter explicitly calls for the dissolution of Israel as a sovereign Jewish state and its replacement by a Palestinian Arab nation in which only those "Jews who had normally resided in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion" (no one is quite sure whether this means 1947 or 1881) would be permitted to remain as a tolerated religious minority.

As for the other so-called moderate Arab leaders, few have gone even as far as Sadat, and none has ever gone any further. Bourguiba of Tunisia has earned his reputation as a moderate through the authorship of a strategy designed to destroy Israel by stages, beginning with a political offensive which strongly resembles what has been occurring in the past few years and ending with a final assault against a reduced, weakened, and isolated Israel. Assad of Syria, only yesterday a partisan of the "rejection front," has gained his reputation as a convert to peaceful coexistence with Israel by whispering hints into the ears of a succession of American diplomats, politicians, and newspaper columnists who obligingly return and spread the word, adding that "naturally" he cannot be expected to say such things in the open; and Arafat has been transformed from a bloody terrorist into a moderate by means of the same technique. All public statements by these Arab leaders reasserting their commitment to the dissolution of Israel as a sovereign Jewish state are dismissed as "rhetoric" which every sophisticated observer knows better than to take seriously.

As against these hints and whispers there stands not only the continually reaffirmed commitment of all the Arab countries to the PLO and its declared aim of doing away with the state of Israel by the combined force of political pressure and arms. There also stands the evidence of the Zionism-racism resolution. Through this resolution the Arab countries, with not a single exception, unmistakably announced their conviction that a Jewish state in the Middle East, no matter where its boundaries might be drawn, was morally and legally unacceptable. Senators "visiting the area" might be told differently, but the rest of us—the rest of the world—were told that returning the Sinai to Egypt, the Golan Heights to Syria, and the West Bank to the Palestinians for a new state of their own ruled by the PLO would not make Israel any more legitimate or morally acceptable in the eyes of the Arab countries than holding on to these territories and refusing to negotiate with the PLO have done.

And why indeed should it? The Arabs did not begin to oppose Israel after the Sinai, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank were occupied or after the Arab refugees had been transmuted into a Palestinian nation in exile. They opposed Israel from the very start and made repeated attempts to destroy it. In the words of Walter Laqueur: "The basic issue in the Arab-Israeli conflict is not the border problem or a Palestinian state—the conflict existed before there were occupied territories and before there was a demand for a Palestinian state." The real issue, writes Elie Kedourie, is the right of the Jews, "hitherto a subject community under Islam, to exercise political sovereignty in an area regarded as part of the Muslim domain." Professor Kedourie asks why the Arabs, who have steadfastly refused to grant this right to the Jews, should suddenly relent just when Arab power and influence have so greatly increased. It is a good question, and one might phrase it in another way to sharpen the point still further: why should people who have dreamed of achieving an objective for so long without much hope of success give up on that objective just at the moment when success for the first time seems attainable?

In sum, the idea that it is the intransigence of the Israelis which has prevented a peaceful settlement in the Middle East is yet another stunning inversion of the truth. The only thing about which the Israelis have been intransigent is their right to live in peace as a sovereign Jewish state among their Muslim Arab neighbors. For this they have always been ready to make territorial and other concessions, and they still are. There is of course a small if strident minority of Israelis who wish at all costs to hold onto all the territories forever. But the polls and every other indication show that the great majority of Israelis are still willing to do whatever may be necessary to achieve a secure and lasting peace. Not only do they know that peace would be desirable in itself; they

also understand that retaining territories in which so many Arabs live would in the long run pose a demographic threat to the Jewishness of Israel and (because of the repressive measures which the simple maintenance of order under such circumstances would require) a political threat to its democratic character as well. It is not, then, the Israelis who are the intransigent party in this conflict. The real intransigents in the Middle East are the Arabs who for twenty-eight years have been unwilling or unable to reconcile themselves to the presence of a sovereign Jewish state in their midst, and who on the evidence are no more willing today than they ever were before.

WHATEVER Kissinger or anyone else may intend, therefore, in abandoning the old policy of evenhandedness and embarking instead on a course of one-sided pressures on Israel, the United States is "negotiating over the survival of Israel." For if the change in American policy is dictated by the need to assure an uninterrupted flow of oil from the Middle East to the United States and the other advanced industrial nations, there are no grounds for believing that it can succeed on the diplomatic cheap. Given the intransigent determination of the Arabs to do away with a sovereign Jewish state in their midst, and given their belated discovery that the oil weapon is so potent an instrument for accomplishing this purpose, why would they stop using it after the first victory (the return of Israel to the 1967 boundaries) or even the second (the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank) were won? With Israel reduced and weakened, the way would be open for a military *coup de grâce*. Even if Israel's existence were guaranteed by the United States or some combination of countries, the Arabs would have no great cause for concern. After all, if the United States and the other Western nations are so afraid of an oil embargo now, and so reluctant to use force against the threat or even the actuality of one, why would they be any the less fearful then?

The logic is as inexorable as it is terrible: a Middle East policy based on oil is a policy based on the eventual abandonment of Israel. To make matters almost morbidly ironic, if such a policy is also supposed to pay off in the coinage of a victory over the Soviet Union in the competition for influence in the Arab world, the indications are that it will fail. Already the much-trumpeted triumph of the new "evenhandedness" in leading to a break between Sadat and Brezhnev more and more begins to seem rather less conclusive than advertised, as the facts become known concerning the uninterrupted flow of arms from Moscow to Cairo after the putative break was announced.* Even Jordan, traditionally the most pro-American of the

* See Uri Ra'anan's "The Soviet-Egyptian 'Rift,'" in last month's COMMENTARY for a detailed accounting of these facts.

Arab countries, is now making moves in the direction of Moscow for the purchase of arms which, the Jordanians say, they can get from the Soviet Union at a lower price.

But if, conversely, the purpose of the new policy is to prepare the way for a "guaranteed" settlement and an "honorable" American withdrawal from the Middle East in order to preclude the danger of future confrontations with Soviet power, the ultimate abandonment of Israel is just as inexorably indicated. For why, having gone to such lengths to minimize the risk of clashing with an adversary of greater determination in the use of force than we are now evidently able to mount, would we suddenly decide to rush back into the breach again? Paper guarantees, as the South Vietnamese are only the most recent people to have learned, are a very weak reed indeed for weakened nations to lean upon.

Nor would a joint Soviet-American guarantee be any better for Israel. Even if it could be negotiated, which is highly doubtful, it would not eliminate either the problem of Israel's security against an Arab attack or the problem of a possible confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union in case an attack were to occur. Such a guarantee, as Draper points out, "would give the Soviet Union a veto power or at least a potentially fatal power of obstruction; the United States would be faced with the alternative of negotiating with the Soviet Union or hurriedly breaking with it on the operation of the guarantee." In the former eventuality, the guarantee would for all practical purposes be nullified; in the latter, the danger of confrontation between the two superpowers would once again arise.

V IETNAM, however, is not the only ghost hovering over the idea of a Middle East settlement guaranteed by the United States or some combination of outside powers. The ghost of Munich is also there. Less than a year after a treaty was negotiated at Munich under which the Czechs agreed to "return" the Sudeten regions to Germany and were promised in exchange that Britain and France would come to their aid in the event of an armed attack, Hitler sent his armies across the new boundaries of Czechoslovakia; at that point the British and the French found reasons not to honor their commitment and Czechoslovakia was overrun. Munich has accordingly become the pre-eminent symbol of exactly the kind of "extraordinary cynicism" Henry Kissinger had in mind when ruling out the possibility of "negotiations over the survival of Israel"—the kind of act, he said, through which the world is "morally mortgaged."

Yet one of the many lessons Munich teaches is that even nations, perhaps the most amoral of human creations, are reluctant to mortgage themselves morally, and will consequently act with extraordinary cynicism only when they can persuade

themselves and others that what they are doing is in truth morally justified. Thus in the months leading up to the Munich agreement, the papers in Britain and France were full of articles badgering the Czechs. Their country was criticized for mistreating the German minority in the Sudeten regions, for being an artificial creation, and for posing a danger to world peace: a combination of charges which simultaneously justified forcing the Czechs first to give up the Sudeten territories and then, a bit later, acquiescing in the dissolution of what was after all a "a misbegotten state."

These criticisms of Czechoslovakia bear, as Walter Laqueur has pointed out, "an uncanny resemblance" to the criticisms which have been leveled at Israel in the past few years. As Czechoslovakia, a democratic country, was accused of mistreating the German minority in the Sudeten regions, so Israel, also a democratic country, is accused of mistreating the Arab minority within Israel itself and also, of course, in the occupied territories. As the creation of the Czechoslovak state after World War I was called a mistake by Hitler and Neville Chamberlain, so the creation of the Jewish state after World War II is called a crime by contemporary totalitarians and their appeasers. The insistence by the Czechs that surrendering the Sudeten regions to Hitler would leave Czechoslovakia hopelessly vulnerable to military assault was derided, especially on the Left, as a short-sighted reliance on the false security of territory and arms; so a similar insistence by the Israelis with regard to the occupied territories is treated today with lofty disdain by contemporary descendants of these believers in the irrelevance to a nation's security of territorial buffers and arms. And as the effort of the Czechs to hold out against Hitler's demands for a surrender of the Sudeten regions was called a threat to the policy of "conciliation between the totalitarian states and the democratic states," and therefore a threat to world peace, so Israel's "intransigence" over the occupied territories and the program of the PLO is said to be leading to a new Arab-Israeli war which will in turn lead to another oil embargo, a disruption of the policy of détente between the United States and the Soviet Union, and even a nuclear war.

What this "uncanny resemblance" between the attacks on Israel today and the attacks on Czechoslovakia in 1938 seems to suggest is that the Western powers may indeed be preparing to act with the same "extraordinary cynicism" in the Middle East as they did in Central Europe nearly forty years ago. And what it also suggests is that they mean to do so while pretending to themselves and others that they will not thereby be "morally mortgaged" but on the contrary morally justified.

JUST as Israel is not Vietnam, however, Israel is not Czechoslovakia. Israel might well be forced into a Paris-type or a Mun-

ich-type agreement, but unlike the South Vietnamese in 1975 and unlike the Czechs in 1938, the Israelis would not thereafter allow themselves to be overrun. The Israelis would fight. They would fight with conventional weapons for as long as they could, and if the tide were turning decisively against them, and if help in the form of resupply from the United States or any other guarantors were not forthcoming, it is safe to predict that they would fight with nuclear weapons in the end. No one doubts any longer that they have such weapons, and no one can doubt that they would unleash them in the final extremity. It used to be said that the Israelis had a Masada complex—that, like the Jewish Zealots of the 1st century whose mountain fortress in the Judean desert was about to be stormed by an irresistible force of Roman legionnaires, the Jews of Israel today would commit suicide rather than submit to subjugation by their enemies. But if the Israelis are to be understood in terms of a “complex” involving suicide rather than surrender and rooted in a relevant precedent of Jewish history, the example of Samson, whose suicide brought about the destruction of his enemies, would be more appropriate than Masada, where in committing suicide the Zealots killed only themselves and took no Romans with them.

It follows that the new American policy in the Middle East is not only immoral and ineffective

but mortally dangerous as well. For the specter so often invoked of a nuclear war breaking out in the Middle East because of the “intransigence” of the Israelis is yet one more stunning inversion of the truth concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict. The real danger of nuclear war lies in the opposite direction. It lies in the ideas which have been placing the Israelis under such intolerable moral pressures in the past three years, blaming them and hectoring them, putting them in the dock and on the defensive, magnifying their every fault and discounting their every virtue; and it lies in the policies which are calculated to strengthen the hands of their enemies while isolating and weakening and finally forcing the Israelis into a desperate corner where only the memory of Samson will serve.

If a nuclear war should ever erupt in the Middle East, then, be it on the heads of all those in the United States and elsewhere—inside government and out, in the foundations and in the universities, in the councils and in the press—who under cover of self-deceptions and euphemisms and outright lies are “negotiating over the survival of Israel” instead of making the survival of that brave and besieged and beleaguered country, the only democracy in the Middle East and one of the few left anywhere on the face of the earth, the primary aim of their policies and the primary wish of their hearts.

American Values & American Foreign Policy

Nathan Glazer

THE United States is probably the only major country in the world in which it is taken quite as a matter of course that people will talk seriously about the relation of the nation's values to its foreign policy. We in this country seem to believe, first, that there is something distinctive about our values, such that we can speak—even if with some uncertainty—about *American* values; and, second, that these values do, or should, affect our foreign policy. We do not drag out the theme of American values in their relation to foreign policy only because we happen to be celebrating our bicentennial and feel therefore that some special Sunday topic, some ceremonial theme, is necessary. We are used to talking about American values in many contexts besides foreign affairs—our domestic social policies, our racial policies, the urban crisis, the state of religion, or of the youth, or of the family. For Americans, such considerations are not a Sunday special—they are ordinary everyday fare.

There is one other difference between the United States and other countries in this respect. In England, France, Germany, Japan, or India, only the Right speaks of *national* values and insists that they be made significant in the shaping of policy. In America, however, liberals as well as conservatives are given to asserting that national values should affect foreign policy. I think there is one important reason for this: in the United States when we speak of national values, there is no implication of a primordial past, lost to memory, no suggestion that *our* values arise from race, blood, and soil. To speak of American values is to speak—still, and for most people—of founding documents—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the *Federalist Papers*—known to all, clearly available, existing in the full light of history, and propounding what have by now become universal values, whether or not they are realized in practice. Americans are in the fortunate position that the values asserted in 1776 have in large measure been accepted by all the world. Whatever it was Thomas Jefferson and the other founders

meant in asserting that “All men are created equal,” this statement by now has nothing exclusively American about it. Everyone agrees with the words, whatever he may do in fact.

The United States is thus unique in being able to claim that in speaking of its own national values it does not separate itself from other nations, other races, other peoples. But there is another important reason we can make this claim, and that is that the United States is in fact composed of people drawn from every place and every race. We call our country the “United States,” a name which has no ethnic content at all; and we call ourselves “Americans,” a term with so little ethnic specificity that it can refer to any of the peoples of the New World.

This is not of course to say that the words “American” and the “United States” today always conjure up noble founding documents, or a country open to political and religious refugees and to immigrants seeking better social and economic opportunities. Many today see the United States and the American people in quite a different light. Indeed, the first major problem in talking of American values in relation to foreign policy is whether the values that have guided our foreign policy have truly been the benign ones embodied in our founding documents, or whether they have in contrast been the values of racism, imperialism, class domination, and national arrogance. This latter picture of American behavior in the world is increasingly widespread. It may even be the dominant one today in the world at large, if debates in the United Nations are any evidence, and in large parts of the American population as well, particularly among the educated young, to judge by the general tenor of editorials in college newspapers.

There is no question that the image the United States holds of itself must affect its role in foreign affairs. If it sees itself as a good country and a strong country—the way I would say the overwhelming majority of Americans did between 1945 and 1965—and if it is seen by others in the same way, it will feel confident in playing a large role in the world. If it sees itself as a good though weak country (one present-day image of ourselves), or as wicked and strong (another), or as wicked and weak, there will be a tendency to retrench and withdraw.

We are now engaged in a great struggle over the

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shape of this image. The speeches of the President and his Secretary of State, and of various presidential contenders, show a wide range of views as to the proper assessment of recent American foreign policy. Has it been a defense of freedom by a strong nation, which has suffered some recent reverses but can still recover? This seems to be the point of view of the President and Secretary of State; but the Secretary is said to believe that we are really weak, or weakening, and he is attacked for wanting to make the best deal possible with those who are evil and strong. The attackers divide between one group which believes we are good and still strong and should exercise the powers that belong to such a station; and another group which feels that we are less than good, and that whether we are weak or strong, we would be well advised to reshape and realize our values at home before we try to lecture anyone else about values, or exercise our will on other countries.

To complicate matters still further, the very notion that our foreign policy does distinctively express American values is today under severe attack. On the one side are those who say that we should indeed be guided in our foreign policy by basic American values, but that we have in fact forsaken those values, and that we should now return to them as soon as possible. (Which values to emphasize—whether a commitment to democracy, or a commitment to freedom, or the tradition of non-intervention—is yet another matter.) On the other side are those who say, on the contrary, that material interests, not values, should guide the foreign policy of any nation, including our own; that we have not followed this eminently sensible rule; and that we should get back to it as soon as possible. Oddly enough, these two very different positions—the one which says that we have been supporting the wrong values in our foreign policy and should start supporting the right ones; and the one which says that whatever values we have been supporting, we ought simply to follow our national interests—seem to result in the same practical proposals: that the United States should try to do less in the world, reduce its foreign-policy commitments, scale down its military budget, and tend to its own affairs.

THIS is a frightfully oversimplified picture of the complex and I believe valuable debate now going on in foreign policy—a debate that is rather more sophisticated than the one we heard in 1960, or in any of the presidential campaigns since, even though, as in the case of all debates in all presidential campaigns, there is an avoidance of sharpness and clarity.

But one question raised by this debate seems reasonably sharp and clear. When the American government acts in foreign affairs, what should be our bias toward that action? Should we—initially, at least—accept the protestations of our leaders

that their policies are meant to advance democracy and freedom as well as, one assumes, the interests of the United States? Or are we to see these policies as very likely expressing the interests of small and unrepresentative and self-serving elements—the security establishment, the armed forces, the multinational corporations? What are we to do about the American claim that the United States alone among the great powers effectively supports certain important values in the world? What are we to do about the claim that Woodrow Wilson made, that Franklin D. Roosevelt and all our Presidents since have made, that the dominating force in the shaping of American foreign policy is not simply national interest—although interest must always be a crucial factor—but also the defense of democracy and freedom?

The claim is truly a unique one. Only the great Communist powers make a similar one. They too say they represent the interests of humanity, and of democracy—a “truer” democracy than our own. Countries like England, West Germany, and Japan put forward much more modest claims. They limit themselves to defending their national interests, and if they also say they are pursuing the values of democracy and liberty, it is only by way of following the lead of the United States.

Important groups of intellectuals and important political forces in those countries, and in ours, of course, deride this whole idea. The consequences of this derision are clear. But is it just? Would it be best for the world—and for the United States itself—if we were to slink back to that position in world affairs we held in the 1930's, with a neutrality act limiting our ability to intervene in any foreign conflict, and with a public opinion convinced that any foreign-policy initiative must have been undertaken to advance narrow economic interests, probably those of the “munitions makers” and “the merchants of death”?

There is one overriding argument which convinces me that we should not radically alter our stance in world affairs in this way—the argument that there is a major threat to democratic institutions and to the independence of nations coming not from the United States but from Soviet Russia and Communist China and the world movement over whose leadership they compete. I would contend that there is something truly special about Communist governments which separates them from the run-of-the-mill authoritarian regimes and military dictatorships that dominate most of the countries of the world, or from the racist regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia. What is unique about Communist regimes is, first, the *thoroughness* of their control over all the institutions of society, over every means of the independent propagation of opinion, over, indeed, in the more effective Communist countries (China perhaps), even the very thinking of dissenting opinions. Added to this thoroughness of control is the *permanence* of control. There are no examples of successful anti-

Communist revolutions or coups. There are scarcely any examples of underground movements against Communist regimes.

Aside from the biggest lie about Communism—that it does *not* suppress freedom—we have a smaller lie more widely accepted, that the suppression of freedom by Communism is no more to be feared than its suppression by authoritarian anti-Communist regimes like Salazar's Portugal, Franco's Spain, Park's South Korea, Pinochet's Chile. In the real world, however, we must make distinctions of degree. And if we make these distinctions, then a wide gap opens between almost any Communist regime and any authoritarian anti-Communist regime. In the latter, independent powers still exist: a Catholic Church, industrialists and small businessmen, intellectuals and universities, a press not completely muzzled. It is the absence of such powers independent to any degree of the state that distinguishes Communism from other regimes. In Communist countries the issue of muzzling the press does not even arise because the press is so entirely in the hands of the state that the question is only what directives will be given to journalists already employed by the state, not how independent journalists may still be controlled by the state. In the press of Communist countries we do not find subtle efforts to criticize the regime, such as are made constantly in the press of ordinary authoritarian regimes. Communist control is of a completely different type, as different as the ownership of a business is from the influence on it that a powerful customer can wield. In authoritarian regimes, the state is a powerful customer, and can lean on the press very heavily at will; in a Communist regime it owns the press (and everything else as well).

Thus in Communist countries the most rigorous control exists over any form of printing press, mimeograph machine, duplicating machine, because they are the means whereby a dissident opinion may make itself felt. The *Economist* reports that in Russian factories almost all documents are still copied by hand—for it is too dangerous, the state believes, to have xerox machines about. (Think after all of what Daniel Ellsberg did with a xerox machine.)

We are told that there are differences among Communist regimes, that they also evolve, and that Communism may yet prove to be compatible with at least some degree of freedom. Certainly these possibilities should be considered. But if in Soviet Russia dissidents are now exiled rather than executed or sent to labor camps, little else has changed. The press is still totally a state press, spreading the most outlandish lies about the rest of the world, lies which can never be refuted or discussed in print or in any public forum. The duplicating machine is still a carefully held monopoly of the state. Only one Communist country has in effect moved far enough away from the central Communist characteristic of the suppression of

freedom to suggest that evolution toward a greater degree of freedom *may* be compatible with Communism—namely Yugoslavia. I do not know how Yugoslavia comes out on the xerox-machine test, but if we use another key test of freedom—the right to travel or the right to emigrate—we see that Yugoslavia does break the uniform pattern of the other Communist states, all of which sharply limit that right (they *own* their people). Yugoslavia is indeed a maverick and has been for almost thirty years. But we should also remember that not a single other Communist state has followed its example.

YET even if we grant that Communism suppresses freedom to a degree almost never found in other authoritarian regimes; and even if we grant further that Communism never evolves into parliamentary democracy, or is ever even overthrown by force and succeeded by freer regimes (as has happened in the case of such ordinary authoritarian regimes as once existed in Portugal, Spain, and Greece), there is still the question of whether Communism as such need be of any concern to American foreign policy. Here, too, we may grant that Communism, while rarely adventurist, is expansionist—Cuba has tried again and again to spread Communist regimes in Latin America; North Korea and North Vietnam were adamant for decades that they would extend Communism to their non-Communist fellow states; Russia has in recent years developed a major capacity to maintain fleets and land armies in very distant areas; and neither Russia nor China has ever forsworn the ideology which insists that their form of government is destined to spread over the entire world. But does this expansionism really threaten the United States? And if not, why should we worry?

There are many reasons to worry, and some of them have nothing to do with any distinctive American values. One reason is the balance of power—the dangers that inevitably arise when a rival nation becomes too strong. Another is concern for American economic interests abroad—investments which might be lost, trade which might be curtailed or carried on under worse terms. These are the common coin of international relations, and with respect to them the United States is in much the same position as England was in those centuries when it feared that first France and then Germany would grow too strong. The nature of our society as against theirs has nothing to do with such considerations.

But there are also, I am convinced, considerations of another order which make it difficult for us to accept with equanimity the expansion of a form of social organization based on the destruction of freedom. The truth is that we *are* in fact committed, quite apart from our material interests, to the kind of society which the spread of Communism would make impossible. We do want

—and particularly in those parts of the world from which so many of us stem—societies that value and allow for freedom of speech and of the press, diversity of religious belief and practice, a variety of freely competing political parties, many different kinds of institutions independent of the state and maintaining their distinctive styles and strengths. For us the world is a safer and more congenial place with such societies in it and would be a more dangerous and depressing place without them.

FOR all this, there is yet another and today very powerful argument against offering the benefit of the doubt to an activist American foreign policy trying to advance or protect the values of democracy and liberty. It is the “clean-hands” argument. We have come a long way from the ringing words of President Kennedy in his inaugural speech. Today we are embarrassed by those words, and what followed them: the support of unsavory and corrupt dictators, the attempts to assassinate leaders of other nations, the massive intervention against a Social Democratic government in the Dominican Republic, the incredibly destructive war in Vietnam, the overthrow of Allende’s government in Chile, and so on. And there followed other things at home that seemed to disqualify us from playing the role of champion of democracy and liberty: the assassination of civil-rights workers and black leaders, the inability to establish sound social policies for the poor, the decay of the cities. What gives us the right, then, to decide that Communism should not advance?

One part of the clean-hands argument can easily be met. However great our domestic failings may be, they are smaller, much smaller, than they were when we took up arms against fascism under Roosevelt, when we defended Europe and South Korea from the advance of Communism under Truman, when we forged a system of anti-Communist alliances under Eisenhower, when we hurled those fine words of defiance at the enemies of freedom under Kennedy. Once again, just as in speaking of the deprivations of freedom under Communism, and comparing them with the deprivations of freedom under authoritarian non-Communist regimes, one has to deal in questions of degree. The fact is that enormous progress toward equal justice has been made in this country. The black man votes, participates in government, rises to positions of leadership in public and private affairs; greater attention—and governmental protection—is given to Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans and American Indians and other minorities than ever before; the rights of the accused have never been better protected; we pay today the most meticulous attention to what democracy and equal rights seem to demand; we insist on “one man, one vote”; we carefully protect the suffrage regardless of literacy or language; and we

have undertaken many other measures that I believe are unique to this country. If the defense of democracy and liberty requires for its legitimacy some suitable measure of these goods at home, then we can say that the United States meets that requirement more fully today than ever before.

So far as our behavior abroad is concerned, the clean-hands argument is not so easily dealt with. We have in the past few years been overwhelmed and embarrassed with all the details of the making and implementation and miscarriages of American foreign policy. Nothing the CIA has ever done, or the National Security Council has ever thought of and discussed, or that Presidents have ever considered in consultation with their closest advisers, is, it would appear, now kept from public scrutiny. Much that we have learned is unsavory, much of it is immoral, some of it seems downright criminal. The plots to assassinate foreign leaders seem to me the worst, but the massive bribery or illegal financial support of foreign political parties—including right-wing and reactionary forces—has done so much damage to the cause of democracy in democratic countries that it is very hard to imagine any excuse. The easiest course is to throw up one’s hands in despair, to say that if this is what is necessary to combat the influence of Castro’s Cuba, or to sustain the Christian Democrats in Italy, or to keep the Liberal Democrats in Japan in power, then it would be better to do nothing at all. There are American values and doctrines enough—from Washington’s farewell address on—to support a withdrawal from such sorry efforts to manage the affairs of the world.

A tempting response—but a wrong one. First, at the very least, the operations of our intelligence agencies and of the multinational corporations will now be subjected to closer congressional oversight, and to the oversight of a self-confident press. The restraints on Presidents, who have all too often approved actions we now find immoral—and which have worked to undermine our interests and our values, rather than to advance them—have undoubtedly become stronger as well.

Thus American foreign policy, whatever its substantive content, will operate with cleaner hands in the future—with such clean hands, indeed, that it may well lose all effectiveness. No diplomatic document, it seems, can any longer be prevented from leaking, even when there is no question of impropriety involved. One hopes that some kind of balance will be restored, perhaps after the next presidential term begins, between the need for secrecy and the need for public scrutiny. In any case, the dirty tricks of the past are unlikely to pose the same kind of problem for American foreign policy in the future.

THE second argument against an activist foreign policy in defense of what we see as our distinctive values is that, as a matter of fact, we have not supported democracy and lib-

erty abroad—we have supported regimes on the basis of their opposition to Soviet Russia and Communism and their hospitality to free enterprise, not on the basis of their commitment to democracy and freedom. Thus we supported anti-Communist regimes in South Korea and South Vietnam even though they rigged elections, jailed their critics, interfered with and hampered the press. In return for military bases we supported authoritarian regimes in Spain and Portugal and Greece. We made frantic efforts to prevent Allende from coming into power, and when these failed, we made further efforts to overthrow him. In the face of such evidence, how can it be said that we support democracy and liberty abroad?

The answer is that the *main* thrust of American foreign policy has indeed been to support the shrinking island of democracies in the world, centered in Western Europe and including as outposts Israel and Japan. If one insists—as Communists (calling themselves “socialists”) do—that the parliamentary democracy and civil liberties of these nations are frauds, if one accepts the argument that Israel is racist, that Japan is really anti-democratic, that West Germany is in danger of a renascent Nazism, then indeed there is nothing to explain in the support the United States has sometimes given to what we ourselves call non-democratic regimes. All American foreign policy would then be of a piece. But if, using one's eyes and one's common sense, one rejects the Communist view of the world, American actions in support of non-democratic regimes become aberrations to explain. And they can be explained.

First, if the central objective of American foreign policy is to maintain democracy and freedom in the countries of Western Europe and in Japan, then military measures are necessary. This accounts for our relations with Spain and Portugal and South Korea. And if one asks why the West European democracies have not always associated themselves with such policies—undertaken by the United States in order, after all, to protect them—the answer is that because they do not bear the central responsibility for the Western alliance, they have the luxury of acting more purely and righteously. Further, the presence of large left-wing parties and strong left-wing ideological forces in those countries makes it difficult for the ruling parties to accept pragmatic deals with the likes of Franco, Salazar, and the Greek Colonels. The United States takes on the onus.

Military necessity explains some of our dealings with authoritarians. But what explains our hostility to certain democratic regimes—Allende's Chile, for example? I will not defend these policies, but I will insist that they do not come from hostility either to democracy or to socialism and social democracy as such. That we have a strong bias in our foreign policy in favor of capitalism and free enterprise, and against government ownership and control of the economy, is obvious. At

the same time, however, we have no complaints against the Social Democratic party of Germany, our strongest ally. We are not concerned that Norway or the United Kingdom does or does not have a socialist government, or that they levy virtually confiscatory taxes on wealth and business. We are not deterred by state ownership of almost all productive resources in Yugoslavia.

What accounted for American intervention in Chile, and in the Dominican Republic, was the belief that in those cases—but certainly not in all cases—socialism seemed allied with, or a stepping stone on the way to a rapid installation of, Communism. We had undoubtedly been made jumpy by the example of Cuba, our analysis may well have been wrong, and right or wrong, I believe we would have been wiser to refrain from intervention. Certainly intervening undermined the claim that we act in defense of democracy and freedom. But I do not think those interventions, placed against the larger picture of steady American support for the major democracies, have reduced this claim to hypocrisy.

A FINAL point on the clean-hands doctrine. Whether clean or not, by what right, it is asked, does the United States concern itself with the internal policies of other nations, to the point of supporting one party against another, of “destabilizing” regimes democratically chosen, let alone of planning military intervention?

One basis for such a right would not be denied by any sovereign state: a direct and drastic threat to its security, as occurred when Russia placed missiles in Cuba. But that was an exceptional development. There is, however, another justification for such actions, distasteful as they are—that another great state, owing to its political philosophy, its place at the center of a group of closely linked parties expressing the same philosophy and outlook, is unchangingly interventionist throughout the world, its philosophy and public statements justifying such a policy, its private and covert acts often implementing it. Our interventionism is occasioned and justified, then, by the interventionism of the Soviet Union, an interventionism which inevitably means—when successful—fastening on a country full state power in the hands of the Communist party and the deprivation of all personal liberties. The examples of those nations in which Communism, with Russian support, has taken power—the countries of Eastern Europe, Cuba, North Korea, North Vietnam—are a permanent warning of what Russian intervention, through local Communist parties or by direct military action, is likely to mean. Presumably we could in a self-denying ordinance—which much of American public opinion seems to want—take the position that while Russia may intervene to support local Communist parties which threaten the destruction of internal liberty, we should not intervene to support their opponents.

But when one sees what was achieved through the covert intervention by other European states and parties in support of the non-Communist parties in Portugal—the prevention of a Communist takeover there—I think one will hesitate to adopt such a self-denying ordinance in its strictest form (though one will with chagrin agree that the Europeans seem to manage these things much better than we do).

UNDOUBTEDLY there is a danger of arrogance in not accepting an absolute prohibition against interfering in the internal affairs of other nations, even if Communism threatens to achieve power, even if other states are already intervening. We have seen a good deal of that arrogance. Nobody likes it, and we would all want to see it expunged. For myself, I would like to see us undertake operations to save a democratic regime—or a regime that makes the promise of democracy possible—only with fear and trembling, but I would not like to see the self-denying ordinance adopted so that nothing that happens within another country, even if manipulated by states dedicated to the destruction of freedom, is allowed to become of concern to us.

I like the formulation proposed by Daniel P. Moynihan in an essay on Woodrow Wilson.* Wilson, as we know, was committed to self-determination for all peoples, and to the hope that the newly-freed peoples would establish democratic governments. This was an eminently moral position, but it was surrounded by dangers on both sides. The danger on the one side was that it would become moralistic—that we would simply pronounce our values but do nothing to see that they were realized. On the other side was the danger of arrogance—the conviction that our values were so sound that all possible force should be put behind them. Whether or not Wilson avoided these twin dangers of moralism and arrogance it is not necessary for us here to determine. Moynihan believes he did. He writes:

The essential Wilson remains, the Wilson whose singular contribution to the American national experience was a definition of patriotism appropriate to the age America was entering at the time of his Presidency, which is to say patriot-

ism defined first of all as the duty to defend and, where feasible, to advance democratic principles in the world at large. . . . Always to defend them—prudently if possible, but at the risk, if need be, of imprudence.

The lesson Moynihan draws for the present is the same one I would draw:

. . . There will be no struggle for personal liberty (or national independence or national survival) anywhere in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America which will not affect American politics. In that circumstance, I would argue that there is only one course likely to make the internal strains of consequent conflicts endurable, and that is for the United States deliberately and consistently to bring its influence to bear on behalf of those regimes which promise the largest degree of personal and national liberty. We shall have to do so with prudence, with care. We are granted no license to go looking for trouble, no right to meddle. We shall have to continue to put up with things obnoxious about which there is nothing we can do; and often we may have to restrain ourselves where there are things we can do. Yet we must play the hand dealt us: we stand for liberty, for the expansion of liberty. Anything less risks the contraction of liberty: our own included.

Even if we agree, however, that an interventionist foreign policy in defense of democratic values can be justified, do we have the power for such a policy, do we have the wisdom for it? Especially after Vietnam these are serious questions. I believe the most important development in this presidential campaign is that, however crudely, and with all the distortions and simplifications a presidential campaign makes necessary, they are now being debated. For at least it is not being accepted without argument that what is still the most powerful country in the world, in many ways the most democratic, and the one that still remains to a hundred nations the symbol of an open, free, and desirable social order in which every man may make his way without hindrance, should acknowledge that it is both unable and unwilling to engage in a balanced defense of democracy and freedom.

* "Was Woodrow Wilson Right?," COMMENTARY, May 1974.

Why Allende Fell

Mark Falcoff

AMERICANS, it is said, will do anything for Latin America but read about it. And until recently, Chile was no exception to this rule. Certainly publishers thought so: between 1938 and 1970 fewer than a dozen books in English were published on that country for the general reader, and except for a few anxious Anaconda corporation wives, it is difficult to imagine anyone reading them. Today the problem is just the reverse—namely, how to see the country at all, now that our view is obstructed by a fast-growing thicket of books and hortatory pamphlets.

This is all the more remarkable since Chile is a small and really not very interesting place. It is not "colorful" in the way that North Americans or sun-starved Northern Europeans imagine South America to be. Chileans lack the literature, music, and style of the Brazilians, the abundant cuisine and ideological exotica of the Argentines, the good weather and historic architecture of the Mexicans, and they lack above all that highly developed sense of the ridiculous which is one of the most endearing qualities of Latin Americans generally.

Then why the sudden outpouring of interest? The answer, of course, is that "Chile" is no longer just a place on the map, but a state of mind—a code-word for an entire cluster of issues relating to the problem of social change in underdeveloped countries, and the relationship between primary-producing nations and the capitalist world, particularly the United States. Chile itself probably remains as intrinsically uninteresting as ever to Americans, even to left-wing Americans, but the Chilean drama is understood to be, at least in symbolic terms, uniquely central to our times. In fact, it has become a kind of political passion play whose script even the mundane know by heart.

Let me try to summarize the argument of the drama, very much *a grosso modo*, as it appears in nearly all the recently published books on Chile. In 1970 a popularly-elected Marxist physician, Dr.

Salvador Allende, was inaugurated as President of Chile. Allende had been chosen on a platform committed both to nationalization of his country's mineral resources (largely in the hands of American corporations), and a redress of social grievances within Chilean society. Operating scrupulously within the framework of democratic politics, Allende made an excellent start, but quickly encountered serious difficulties. These were due largely to an international conspiracy led by the United States, first to strangle the government economically through an "invisible blockade," and then, when that appeared to be failing, to encourage and perhaps even order the Chilean army to destroy not only Allende's government but the entire fabric of Chilean democracy. There are plenty of shreds and pieces of evidence to support this view, and new (and embarrassingly larger) fragments are being uncovered every day. The evidence does not do credit to the United States, whatever final responsibility is established. Those who are interested merely in scoring points against capitalism or this country's foreign policy may do so, and move on to other, pressing issues elsewhere. But those seriously interested in Chile, and also in the problems of analysis posed by its tragedy should stay a bit longer, it seems to me, and read more critically into the materials offered for our consideration.

II

ALL revolutionary regimes seem inevitable in power and impossible in defeat—that, after all, is what used to be called the Whig interpretation of history, and we have scarcely emancipated ourselves from it whatever ideologies we currently profess. The Allende regime had a short life, yet it generated a score of books in every modern language recounting its origins in terms of an irreversible dialectic of Chilean history.¹ Now, it is certainly true, as former American Ambassador Edward Korry has recently

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¹ In English, for example, there is David J. Morris, *We Must Make Haste Slowly* (Random House, 1973); Richard Feinberg, *The Triumph of Allende* (New American Library, 1972); and Dale L. Johnson, ed., *The Chilean Road to Socialism* (Doubleday/Anchor, 1975).

said, that "the Communist party of Chile was the largest, best-led, influential, seemingly, Communist party in the hemisphere,"² and that many of the themes of Allende's presidential campaign had been adumbrated for years before his actual assumption of power. But, as H. E. Bicheno suggests, a fascist Chile in 1973 was at least as logical a historical outcome as a Marxist dispensation, to judge not only from the country's social structure, but the number of groups and movements which have existed under the fascist rubric over the past fifty years.³ The right-wing ultras of *Patria y Libertad* were no invention of the Central Intelligence Agency; Bicheno shows that they had dozens, perhaps scores, of Chilean precursors. Thus if Chile was a South American country with a well-established tradition of democracy—as Chilean publicists were wont to boast—it was a democracy which had long displayed pathological symptoms.

Nor can it be repeated often enough that Jorge Alessandri Rodríguez, the candidate of the establishment Right, obtained *only one and four-tenths of a percentage point fewer votes than the victorious Allende!* It is true that Christian Democrat Radomiro Tomic, campaigning on a platform hardly less "revolutionary" than Allende's, obtained the remaining 28 per cent of the vote; at the time this encouraged many sympathetic observers to suggest that when combined with Allende's 36 per cent, this "proved" that a substantial majority of Chileans had voted for radical change. But subsequent developments suggest rather that the Christian Democratic constituency was deeply divided between Centrists with right-wing inclinations and Centrists who favored "an opening to the Left." Thus, Chile in 1970 should be seen as a society ripe not so much for revolution as for civil war. Allende's social policies simply succeeded in splitting this "floating middle" in two, and converting the potential for polarization into a chilling and lethal reality.

FINALLY, few recent commentators have complex (and even contradictory) nature of Allende's governing coalition. This is particularly unfortunate, for few factors tell us more about the causes of his historic failure. Allende was elected with the votes of Socialists, Communists, and left-wing schismatics from Christian Democracy—all united by a common program but sharply divided by divergent philosophies of power. The Communist party had long participated in the banalities of the Chilean parliamentary process, and as a fraternal affiliate of the Communist party of the Soviet Union it strongly adhered to the notion of peaceful coexistence in international relations and legalistic approaches to reform at home. Precisely because of its long experience in Chilean politics, it understood perhaps better than any other party—Left or Right—the difficulties and obstacles confronting rapid transformation of that society. Con-

trary to a widely held misconception in both the United States and Europe, Allende's Socialists were *not* social democrats but a party whose complex origins lay in anarchism, Trotskyism, and other forms of revolutionary Marxism, and which regarded the Communists (perhaps rightly) as stuffy, conservative, and lacking in revolutionary nerve (as well as not quite authentically national).

In his relations with these two parties Allende sometimes resembled Dr. Juan Negrín, the last prime minister of Republican Spain. Both men were Socialists who felt more comfortable with disciplined, realistic Communist allies than with the *avanzados* of their own party. Carrying the analogy of Republican Spain a bit further, we might suggest that the Chilean Communists were far more sensitive than either Allende or the Socialists to the disastrous consequences which might follow in the wake of social polarization at home and confrontation with great powers abroad. Thus, from the beginning, the Communists preached consolidation, a deal with the Christian Democrats, veiled conciliation with Washington, while the Socialists, apparently oblivious of consequences, called for "advance with compromise." It was a replay, allowing for variations of time and place, of the dramatic events chronicled in George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* (1938).

In part, of course, the Socialists were victims of their own world view and their own propaganda, which ascribed to their party and their nation far greater room for maneuver than, as it turned out, either possessed. But in part, also, they were bound by promises made by Allende not only in 1970 but in three preceding presidential campaigns stretching back a full generation. And perhaps, above all, they were fearful of being outflanked by competing revolutionary forces who constantly questioned the government's *bona fides*, especially the *Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR). The *miristas*, middle-class university students who took their Marxism with their morning coffee, encouraged factory workers and landless peasants to occupy their estates and plants in order to embarrass the government into carrying out its program more expeditiously. At some point, perhaps as early as late 1972, perhaps as late as mid-1973, the regime lost control of the process it had unleashed, and found itself compelled to return to the precedent of so many conservative Latin American governments of times past—inviting military men to form a ministry. From there to the tragic events of September 1973, the path was short and unswerving.

² Interview with William F. Buckley, Jr., broadcast on *Firing Line* (PBS), September 29, 1974; published as *The Truth About Chile* (Dinex Minirel, Santiago de Chile, 1974).

³ "Anti-Parliamentary Themes in Chilean History," in Kenneth Medhurst, ed., *Allende's Chile* (Hart-Davis MacGibbon, London, 1972).

III

Now that Allende is gone, foreign Marxists are quick to affirm "what should have been, and to many was, obvious all along, that there is no such thing as a peaceful road to socialism."⁴ Yet they were far from certain at the time. True, not many thought Allende would be elected, or that if elected, he would be allowed to take power, or that if allowed to take power, he would carry out his program. But once he proved them wrong on all three counts they flocked into Chile, a new class of South American tourist, determined to find strengths in a government whose weaknesses they had so eloquently forecast. The most exalted of these tourists, of course, was Cuban Premier Fidel Castro. Now that the original Marxist-Leninist assumptions have been validated by experience, some are succumbing to the temptation to write off the Allende regime as a phantasm from the very beginning.⁵ The ambiguities of the situation seem to have been grasped only by the American Marxists at the *Monthly Review*, whose work appears in *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Chile*.

This volume consists largely of articles published in that magazine between 1970 and 1973. For the most part, these pieces read exceptionally well after the event; unlike many left-wing visitors to Allende's Chile (including Régis Debray), their authors were never much impressed with the sheer size or fervor of the crowds at government rallies. They looked instead at the military, at the foreign-trade situation, at divisions within the government, at the relatively greater resources of its enemies, and they were deeply troubled. Above all they reserved a strong dose of skepticism for the loyalty of the Chilean army, even in those days when Allende himself was pleased to regard it as a pillar of the socialist state. The *Monthly Review* group consistently argued that Allende's revolution could only be *begun* within the norms and forms of bourgeois democracy. To be completed, indeed to survive at all, it would have to make a decisive break with that system and impose an authoritarian regime, a dictatorship of the proletariat. To do anything else was to postpone inevitable disaster.

This is the kind of advice that Allende must have been getting from foreign Marxists (and perhaps not a few Chileans) from the moment of his election. Régis Debray hovers on the verge of suggesting it to the Chilean President in his rather thin "conversations," but dazzled and tongue-tied in the presence of raw power, he holds back.⁶ Sweezy and his associates move quickly to the point. Allende, they believe, should have broken with the Chilean democratic system (such as it was) at the peak of his strength, which they identify as April 1971. In that month the government coalition received 50.9 per cent in municipal elections held throughout Chile, the largest figure it was

ever to obtain at the ballot box. But Allende might well have been answering Sweezy when he assured a reverent Debray that he knew far better than anyone else exactly how far and how fast to push the Chilean political system—and when to stop. His government, he continued, could only survive by not provoking counterrevolution; hence judicious compromises were essential. Those who urged a more radical course of action were inviting him not to permanent revolution, but to suicide.

Surveying the ruins of his government, one can easily and comfortably suggest now that Allende should have broken with a system which subsequently proved that it had no intention of keeping its promises. But who is to say that if the Chilean President had followed Sweezy's prescription he would have escaped his tragic fate? At best he might have plunged his country into a civil war in which the victory of his supporters would be extremely problematic. Or perhaps the military coup of September 1973 would have taken place two years earlier. Allende surely thought so, or acted as if he thought so, and as he was a seasoned professional politician of some thirty years' standing, we must give some credence to his judgment.

This brings us to the subject of the Chilean military. Superficially at least, the most impressive aspect of the Sweezy-Magdoff book is its critical evaluation of the armed forces. Now that General Pinochet and his colleagues have created a fascist regime of astounding barbarity, how prophetic all the warning passages sound! One is compelled to ask: how could Salvador Allende—surely the most experienced Marxist politician in the Western hemisphere—have ignored the obvious danger signals? I would answer that the *Monthly Review* was right—but in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons.

Whatever else one can say about President Allende, he was no fool. If he thought and acted as if the army were loyal to his regime, it was because, for most of the time, it was. We still have Latin American literati like Gabriel García Márquez to see in every Latin American officer a toady of the Pentagon,⁷ but the facts are otherwise. The Chilean military operated on a long-standing tradition of respect for civilian authority, and nearly to the final hours of his Presidency Allende was the beneficiary of that tradition. Let not the realities of the present distort the nature of the past: the Chilean military served Allende long, faithfully, and well. It failed to respond to several right-wing provocations (the assassination, for example, of

⁴ Paul M. Sweezy, "Chile: The Question of Power," in Paul M. Sweezy and Harry Magdoff, eds., *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Chile* (Monthly Review Press, 1974).

⁵ Les Evans, ed., *Disaster in Chile: Allende's Strategy and Why It Failed* (Pathfinder Press, 1974).

⁶ *The Chilean Revolution: Conversations with Allende* (Pantheon, 1971).

⁷ See his "The Death of Salvador Allende," *Harper's*, March 1974.

Army Commander General René Schneider shortly before Allende was to take office); it reestablished order when the regime was attacked in the streets; in the penultimate phase Army Commander General Carlos Prats became Minister of Interior—in effect, Prime Minister of Chile.

If an army has done all of this (and more) for a socialist regime, it does not suddenly turn around and overthrow it for a fistful of Yanqui gold. The fact is that Latin American armies, and the Chilean is no exception, do not like to spend their time and their prestige propping up an embattled civilian government, *any civilian government*. When called upon continually to do so, they almost invariably end up deposing that regime altogether. After all, if they must discipline their fellow-citizens (and bear the brunt of the unpopularity which follows) they ought at least to have the decisive voice in the conduct of government itself. Furthermore, no Latin American army will yield an inch of its weapons monopoly, and the merest suggestion of a “people’s militia” is normally sufficient to place the strongest of civilian leaders (Perón, for example) in mortal peril.

Of course Allende had broad popular support, but he was also intensely opposed by perhaps as much as a third of the Chilean population, a third willing and able to resort to violent attacks on his government. There is little evidence, Admiral Huerta to the contrary,⁸ that Allende was planning a coup against the constitutional regime before his ouster. But it seems probable, as the domestic conflict moved increasingly outside of the halls of Congress and into the streets, that Allende’s only means of continued authority was to rule through the military; and this his service chiefs ultimately denied him, *as indeed they would have denied it to any civilian chief of state*.

It was precisely at that point, of course, that the Socialists, the MIR, and other supporters began in earnest to stockpile arms in preparation for what was believed to be an imminent civil war. The contributors to the Sweezy-Magdoff volume express considerable wonderment at the alacrity with which Allende permitted the Chilean armed forces to make humiliating searches of factories and trade-union offices for arms, but Allende himself seems to have regarded this as the necessary currency with which to buy continued military acquiescence. What the Chilean President failed to see was that there was no price at which the military could be compelled permanently to assure public order—save at the cost of ceding total power itself. In the first truckers’ strike in 1972, General Prats had assumed the post of Interior Minister and used the prestige of the armed forces to persuade the strikers to return to work. The second time around, in mid-1973, Prats had lost the support of his colleagues. He was forced to resign, and with him went hundreds, perhaps as many as two thousand, officers known to be sympa-

thetic to the regime. It was at this point, it seems to me, rather than before, that the military became the “enemy within the gates” prefigured in the Sweezy-Magdoff book.

IV

TO DISCUSS opposition to the regime, and the relationship of the military to it, invariably raises the issue of United States involvement in the overthrow of Allende. To deal adequately with this theme would require an article several times the length of this one, but at the outside several points are worth making. Firstly, the United States government was clearly dismayed by Allende’s election, and regarded the existence of his government as a threat (real or imagined) to its hemispheric and global interests. Secondly, Washington ill disguised its joy at the savage overthrow of President Allende, and it and its embassy in Santiago displayed remarkable insensitivity to the wave of assassinations, tortures, and inhumanity visited thereafter on supporters of the fallen government. Thirdly, the domestic opposition in Allende’s Chile owed much of its vigor, if not its continued life, to subventions from the United States government or its agencies. Much of this can be inferred, at any rate, from the documents assembled by Lawrence Birns in *The End of Chilean Democracy*.⁹ What Birns’s materials do not tell us, however, is the actual content of American policy, and consequently the precise pattern of American action against the Allende regime.

Did Washington order General Pinochet to overthrow Allende? There are many who think so. A brilliant young American historian of Chile present in Santiago during the events of September has even assured me that the planes which attacked the Moneda palace, though bearing Chilean air-force markings, were piloted by Americans, using “smart” bombs which we do not readily sell even to allies. There is some circumstantial evidence to support this line of interpretation, but it is by no means overwhelming. And there is also some evidence to the contrary—namely, that American policy was far more complex, and far less successful, than events would have it.

Of the depth of official American hostility to the Allende government there can be no doubt. As former Ambassador Korry has put it: “I was dead-set against Dr. Allende as a candidate. And everything he stood for. . . I would have welcomed . . . the Chilean Congress voting to keep him out of office, or the Chilean people doing whatever they wished” to prevent him from assuming the Presidency. But, he adds, “I was against the United

⁸ Ismael Huerta, “In Defense of the Junta,” in Lawrence Birns, ed., *The End of Chilean Democracy* (Seabury Press, 1974).

⁹ *Op. cit.*

States doing it."¹⁰ In the same interview he reveals that the International Telephone and Telegraph Company offered on two occasions to finance a coup to prevent Allende from taking office in 1970—and was turned down by Washington *both times*. He concedes that U.S. government funds were authorized to bribe members of the Chilean Senate to vote against Allende—but *never spent*. For his part, Jack Kubisch, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, insists that "it was not in our interests to have the military take over in Chile. It would have been better had Allende served his entire term, taking the nation and the Chilean people into complete and total ruin. Only then would the full discrediting of socialism have taken place. Only then would people have gotten the message that socialism doesn't work. What has happened," he laments, "has confused this lesson."¹¹

All of these statements suggest an American policy aimed not toward achieving Allende's immediate ouster, but toward discrediting him over an extended period of time—in point of fact, to 1976. In that year Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei would be eligible to run for another presidential term, and *his* restoration to power through free elections would constitute a blow far more devastating to the cause of socialism in Latin America than the martyrdom of Allende and some thousands of his followers.

DOES this attribute an unwonted degree of cynical brilliance to Washington officialdom? One might think so on the face of it, but Professor Paul Sigmund has assembled some recent materials suggesting that it does not. Reviewing the evidence for the alleged "invisible blockade" of Chile by foreign sources of credit,¹² he points out that if American officials were intent upon shutting off Chile's economic life-line, they were amazingly slow about their business; "pipeline credits" approved during the final months of the Frei regime were expedited without difficulty.¹³ And he shows that during the first three months of Allende's administration (September-December 1970), private American banks extended Chile an additional \$80 million in new lines of credit.

It is certainly true that later on, in 1971 and 1972, Chile found U.S. money markets utterly unresponsive, but this was after (November 1971) her government had declared a moratorium on most of the nation's foreign debts, and, more to the point, had expropriated vast numbers of American enterprises—for what their owners regarded as token compensation (and in the case of the copper companies, no compensation whatever).¹⁴ President Nixon's insistence upon adequate compensation to expropriated concerns as the prerequisite to further U.S. aid, and the Gonzalez Amendment, by which the United States Congress in effect instructed American representatives on

the great multinational lending agencies to vote against Chilean credit applications, may seem actions both illiberal and ungenerous, as by some lights they doubtless were. But to refuse a defaulted debtor additional credit is not *prima facie* an act of internal subversion—it is a rather ordinary, humdrum business practice.¹⁵

¹⁰ *The Truth About Chile*. Ambassador Korry adds that in late September 1970, he reported to Washington that "there was no possibility of any kind that Dr. Allende would not be confirmed as President and I further warned gratuitously that if anyone in Washington were to be thinking of a United States intervention, direct or indirect, to bar Allende from the Presidency, they should be fully aware that the consequences would be worse than the Bay of Pigs, both in Chile and in the United States."

¹¹ Tad Szulc, "The View from Langley," *Washington Post*, October 21, 1973; reproduced in Birns, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-64.

¹² "The 'Invisible Blockade' and the Overthrow of Allende," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1974.

¹³ Lest the full significance of these credits be underestimated, they should be enumerated here. Between 1971 and 1972 the Agency for International Development dispersed \$5.5 million from previously authorized loans; technical-assistance loans of \$800,000 a year continued uninterrupted; as did the Peace Corps, Food for Peace, and \$15 million in aid to the army which at the time was considered (by Allende) a pillar of his regime.

¹⁴ The basis of this denial was a Chilean claim that these companies had in the past repatriated profits in excess of the 14 per cent which the Andean Pact (1969) subsequently determined was the fair share which such concerns should be allowed. Allende worked back to 1955, when accurate records were beginning to be kept.

¹⁵ Nor can it be unreservedly claimed—as friends of the expired regime are wont to do these days—that by their actions American banks and credit agencies achieved by "slow strangulation" what otherwise might have been necessary by more violent and manifest means. For what Chile could not obtain from Washington and New York proved forthcoming from what can only be regarded as a remarkable diversity of sources, to wit: between July 1970 and June 1973 the World Bank loaned Chile \$46 million, and at the time of Allende's overthrow was prepared to disperse an additional \$22 million subsequently approved. During the same period the International Monetary Fund extended Chile \$83 million to compensate her for exchange losses suffered through the falling world price of copper, and \$250 million in short-term credits were obtained from Mexico, Canada, Australia, and Western European nations, all eager to replace American suppliers in the Chilean market. The socialist world dutifully came up with nearly half a billion scarce dollars—\$446 million from the USSR, China, and Eastern Europe. Further, \$70 million in longer-term loans were obtained from other Latin American countries, and between November 1971 and December 1972, an additional \$200 million was obtained from Great Britain, Spain, France, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, and Finland. True, the Inter-American Development Bank turned a deaf ear to new Chilean applications, but still properly dispersed \$54 million authorized during the Frei years (1964-70). The Export-Import Bank of Washington, D.C., was more unbending; in August 1971 (a month after a major credit moratorium was declared by the Chilean government) it deferred judgment on a proposed loan for \$21 million; this decision was apparently the brainchild (if such a term is appropriate) of Treasury Secretary Connally. It is difficult to see whom this hurt except the United States, and especially the state of Washington, whose ailing economy could have used the business—for, alas, the Chileans were planning to spend the money re-equipping their national airline with Boeing jets! Instead, the money, if they found it, must have been spent in England or France. (Cf Sigmund.)

By this I am not attempting to argue—it would be disingenuous to do so—that the refusal of additional credit to Chile by the United States government in 1971 and 1972 was a decision inspired purely by business considerations. It was nothing of the sort. By withholding funds from the Allende regime Washington hoped to add significantly to its bag of troubles, and to make life more unpleasant for the Chilean people under a socialist government. We now know as well that concurrently American sources were covertly channeling funds to opposition newspapers¹⁶ and political groups in Chile. *But at its most extreme, this proves nothing more than an intent to make the Allende experiment a dismal failure, not to achieve its violent overthrow before—to borrow the macabre phrase of Undersecretary Kubisch—"the lesson had been learned."*

Moreover, unless one accepts the alibi of the current ruling junta—namely, that Allende was planning a coup of his own shortly before his overthrow—one must wonder why Washington would have thought a military revolution was necessary in Chile. For by mid-1973 copper prices and copper production (now in nationalized mines) had declined. The nation's foreign-exchange reserves were utterly exhausted. Chile had ceased to pay on virtually all of her international obligations. The annual rate of inflation had risen from 33 per cent to 200 or 250 per cent—perhaps even more. There was an incipient crisis in agriculture, the rationing of articles of prime necessity, and a steady breakdown of public order. By no means all of this could have been achieved by American policymakers, no matter how deft. *But if their purpose was to prepare the way for a thumping defeat of Chilean socialism at the polls in 1976, the situation in September 1973 was remarkably consonant with that policy.* Unfortunately for the United States government, however, the Chilean military declined to play the role envisaged in Washington's script, and embarked instead upon a drastic and violent course which deprived the Chilean people of the valuable political lesson Mr. Kubisch intended to teach them.

V

IT is readily conceded that the above analysis may not be correct, for governments, like individual men and women, do not always act rationally. But for those many who believe that governments operate in strict accordance with ineluctable economic laws, there can be only one satisfactory explanation for the fall of Allende—the machinations of U.S. imperialism. Specifically, a government which nationalized American holdings in so strategic a raw material as copper *could not be allowed* to survive, for to permit Chile to recover control of this basic national resource boded ill for the future of the U.S. "system" as a whole. This, or something very like it, is

the perspective which nowadays informs much of the literature on Chile. For people who believe this, or write as if they do, Theodore H. Moran's *Multinational Corporations and the Politics of Dependence: Copper in Chile*¹⁷ will be exceedingly bad news. For it systematically demolishes most of the notions upon which Marxist or neo-Marxist theories of economic imperialism are based, at least insofar as Chile is concerned.

Nowhere does Moran deny that Chile and its copper have been good to American investors; quite the contrary. What he does say—and demonstrate—is that the picture of a pliant Chilean elite obsequiously fattening the corporate purses of Wall Street for more than fifty years, until Allende came along to right all wrongs, is a monstrous distortion. Most treatments of this subject are but snapshots; Moran instead provides a slow-motion study of several evolving phases in the complex history of an industry.

During the first phase, stretching roughly from World War I to World War II, the times were halcyon indeed for American investors. In the 20's, for example, paying practically no taxes at all, they collected between 14 (Anaconda) and 20 to 40 (Kennecott) per cent a year on their initial investments, while the Chilean parliament and press showered them with hosannas for rescuing the nation from an earlier collapse of the world nitrate market.

The period immediately after World War II was no less profitable to the foreign corporations, and somewhat more advantageous to the Chilean government, since by then taxes absorbed 60 per cent of the companies' earnings. Yet paradoxically, the political climate in which they had to operate began to deteriorate rapidly. They found themselves blamed by Chilean politicians (by no means exclusively from the Left) for the falling world price of the metal, and a rising chorus of domestic criticism led the Chilean government to take over foreign marketing of copper in 1951.

Four years of a nationalized market mechanism did not remedy the problem—far from it. Between 1951 and 1954 prices did not improve, and in fact

¹⁶ In his interview with William F. Buckley, Jr., Korry reveals that many opposition newspapers, particularly *El Mercurio* of Santiago, could not have survived the Allende years without continual (if covert) American subventions. True, the Ambassador says, the government did not close down opposition newspapers, but Allende "had just about eliminated all sources of advertising for" them. "He controlled all their credits [Allende had long since nationalized private banking in Chile], and he was not going to give them credit unless they gave him political support. We knew that for a fact." Korry thus raises an interesting ethical question about socialist regimes of the Allende type. Can they be regarded as truly tolerant of a critical press if they nationalize sources of advertising revenue and credit, and utilize those sources for political means? In this light Allende seems retrospectively somewhat less tolerant of dissent than many—including this writer—had been inclined to believe.

¹⁷ Princeton University Press, 1974.

Chile's share of the world market actually dropped a percentage point. It was a thumping defeat for proponents of what might be called conservative economic nationalism; the only solution seemed to be increased productivity (hence, new investment) to compensate for the depressed price of copper. In 1955 the Chilean government did a complete turnabout: new laws (the so-called *Nuevo Trato*) offered foreign mining companies a lower tax rate, special depreciation schedules on new investments, free import rights on equipment, and renewed control over pricing and marketing.

Yet this capitulation to foreign capital failed to yield its promised fruits. Anaconda and Kennecott took advantage of the benevolent new laws to rake in bumper profits (sometimes twice or three times the rate of their earnings elsewhere), but made few new investments in the country. Consequently, it cannot be surprising that by 1964 both Eduardo Frei and Salvador Allende in their presidential campaigns were advocating some form of nationalization of the copper industry.

Frei's proposal, the more conservative of the two, was the one which the Chilean electorate chose to try first. Although exceptionally complex, in general it envisioned a greatly augmented productivity and an equally significant increase in Chilean participation in the ownership and management of the industry. For the companies, the pay-off was to be continued (and presumably profitable) operation in Chile under a virtual guarantee against precipitous and punitive expropriation. Frei's program, widely touted as the "Chileanization" of the industry, was extremely successful, above all in terms of sheer dollars and cents. From 1966 to 1970 the nation's revenues from expanded production more than doubled, and for the first time in many years, thanks largely to the Vietnam war, Chile found itself in a position to dictate international pricing policy. The American corporations shared in the bonanza, of course, but far from placating their Chilean critics, the success of the Frei program "seemed to prove," Moran writes, "the wisdom of carrying out what the country had wanted to do all along—ditch the corporate producers' price system and go for all the market could bear." Thus, in 1970 Salvador Allende came to power committed not to partnership with, but full expropriation of, the foreign mining concerns in Chile.

Moran, in sum, demonstrates three important points often ignored in the literature on Chile: first, that the dissatisfaction with American copper concerns was long-standing and shared by a wide spectrum of Chilean opinion—in fact, the Right, far from being a toady of the American corporate community, often used the companies as a whipping boy to divert attention from the basic social inequalities of Chilean society itself; second, that the deteriorating political position of the copper companies, far from *responding* to increased exploitation, actually paralleled an augmented con-

tribution to Chilean society through corporate and other taxes; and third, that previous (conservative) Chilean regimes had seriously tried, without success, to take over phases of the industry long before the Presidency of Allende. It is in the reasons for that failure that Moran makes his greatest contribution. For in a lengthy discussion of the technical problems of the copper industry, he reveals for the first time why the Allende regime encountered such serious difficulty in the repatriation of the nation's mineral resources.

By 1970 the impact of copper on Chilean life was enormous; in some years it amounted to as much as 20 per cent of the gross national product and 40 per cent of Chilean tax revenues; exports of the metal could constitute anywhere from 30 to 80 per cent of all hard-currency earnings in a country which had to import a great variety of its necessities, including much of its food. Therefore it was logical for the Chileans to assume that copper loomed no less large in the national life of its principal customer, the United States, and that if Chile chose to reassert her sovereignty over this metal, we would have no choice but to make our peace with the new order of things.

However, this attitude (and the concrete acts which it inspired) was based, as Moran shows, on a pathetically incomplete knowledge of the industry. The rise of copper coincides with a great expansion in electrical power, beginning around the turn of the century. But since World War II, other metals, notably aluminum, have presented copper with serious competition. The companies in recent years have responded by diversifying into aluminum itself, or into coal, iron, even petroleum. They have also made serious efforts to keep prices low, so that copper will not be priced out of the market altogether. This, not corporate greed as such, explains the situation which even the *Nuevo Trato* legislation of 1955 could not remedy.

Furthermore, stockholders in the major copper companies have for years been urging their managements to get out of Chile altogether—to go back to the U. S. and Canada, where operating costs might seem initially higher, and quality of ore lower, but proximity to marketplace is frequently greater, and the political and labor climate decidedly more favorable. New technology has made it possible for ores far less rich than those of Chile to be mined in North America at a rate which has made them nearly competitive, and when the political risk is factored in, very competitive indeed. As Moran puts it, long-term stability and security are frequently more attractive than risky bonanzas of interminate date. Further:

The classical model of the simple firm maximizing its marginal return on one product in one country—investing in new production until marginal cost equals marginal price—cannot by itself account for the behavior of large, diversi-

fied, multinational companies, or provide a guide for the host country policy. . . .

The basic asymmetry in the strategies of the foreign copper companies in Chile—namely, that the companies were interested in maximizing returns to their global corporate systems while the country was interested in maximizing returns in one country and at one stage of operations—meant that the invisible hand that harmonizes interests in classical theory was much too invisible.

This explains, at any rate, why the Frei government found Kennecott so eager to sell their El Teniente mine to the Chilean state in 1965, and it also sheds much light on what happened to Chilean copper after Allende's nationalization decrees in 1970 and 1971.¹⁸ The copper companies and Chile simply were not operating in the same cognitive universe; unfortunately for Allende, the realities of the world market rather than the imperatives of Marxist theory, made it entirely possible for the capitalist world to do without Chilean copper—but Chile, it was found, could not quite survive without massive infusions of aid from the hated exploiters. In point of fact, even with more than half a billion dollars' worth of loans factored into the Chilean economy in three short years, the regime collapsed with a loud and tragic thud.

VI

THE purpose of these observations is not to excuse the United States government for its actions in Chile, but to insist that the area of Chilean responsibility for events in that unhappy country is rather greater than most of the recent literature is willing to admit. Granted, Washington's policies in Chile (as, during the Nixon years, frequently at home) were mean-spirited, vindictive, and destructive—yet had Allende's regime rested on a broader and deeper base of popular support, it might well have survived its six-year mandate.

Furthermore, to criticize American policy in Chile in the present context is to concede, at least implicitly, that a different policy was both possible and feasible. Moran alone of the authors here discussed provides some evidence that a socialist transformation in Chile was not a serious threat to

the welfare of the United States; all of the others seem to suggest that, yes, the Allende regime *was* a serious threat to American power and therefore *had* to be destroyed—and then turn around and express shock and surprise that Washington acted exactly the way it *had* to act, given those premises. Put another way, if one is going to apply Marxist categories of analysis, then one cannot escape a gloomy Marxist outcome. If one wants the United States to act intelligently, generously, and humanely in world affairs, then one must begin by assuming that such conduct is possible, let me repeat, within the present context. (To predicate foreign-policy reform on a social revolution in the United States is to postpone matters to the Second Coming, and therefore not a serious proposal.)

Finally, the case of Chile suggests a curious irony—that the most serious practitioners of Chilean Marxism were the American government and the American business community, who frequently acted as if the security and well-being of Western civilization depended upon an unremitting and unlimited hostility to a socialist regime in a far-off South American country. Therefore, those who would reshape our relations with underdeveloped countries would best begin at home, by convincing both the business and foreign-policy establishments that there is a possible middle ground between total hostility and total capitulation to Third World nationalism. Professor Moran's book is an excellent start. However, the best of these efforts will fail if leaders in the primary-producing nations do not likewise lower the ideological temperature of their foreign-policy pronouncements. Otherwise both developed and underdeveloped nations will continue to lurch toward an increasingly chaotic and hostile world order very much of their own making.

¹⁸ The Allende regime also encountered other difficulties in managing a fully nationalized industry having nothing to do with the conditions of the world market. Moran identifies them as (a) a serious breakdown of labor discipline and an increase in featherbedding; (b) "sectarian struggles" in the supervision of the mining sector—fights among Communists and Socialist managers and labor leaders; (c) a more effective retaliation on the part of expropriated companies than had been anticipated. Korry reveals that Allende and the Communists began to realize the enormity of this threat a bit late, but their efforts to remedy matters by conciliating the companies were sabotaged by the Socialist party.

Imagining the Holocaust

David Stern

THROUGHOUT every facet of contemporary culture the Holocaust—the systematic murder of six million European Jews under Hitler—has become the particular image for the barbarism of our time, the modern paradigm of man's inhumanity to man. As A. Alvarez wrote in these pages some twelve years ago, specifically about the impact of the Holocaust on literature, the concentration camps "have become symbols of our own inturnd nihilism . . . in them, the language of our sickness was created."* A corresponding effort to understand and explain the Holocaust has proceeded by analogy, pointing out alleged resemblances between what happened in the death camps and other atrocities that have occurred in modern times, or between the Nazi machinery of destruction and the real and sometimes imagined structure of modern life in general. In the same article Alvarez went on to suggest that the concentration camps of World War II were "a small-scale trial run for a nuclear war"; that they bore a resemblance to contemporary mass technological society with its apparatus for the annihilation of personal identity; and that an analogy between them and the general *Angst* of the post-modern age might be inferred from such texts as Norman Mailer's "The White Negro." Other apparent parallels to the Holocaust that have been invoked in recent years range from the Soviet prison camps of the Stalin era to the various civilian massacres committed during the Vietnam war.

Yet all such comparisons to the particular horror of the Holocaust are ultimately inadequate, most of them for obvious reasons. Before the Holocaust occurred, history simply had not provided anything remotely resembling the apocalyptic totality and programmatic terror of the Nazi effort—so nearly successful—to destroy the Jews of Europe. Not even the long and barbaric history of anti-Semitism offered precedent for the colossal scale and cunning efficiency which the execution of atrocity assumed in Nazi hands, the bizarre ordinariness of its procedures, or, for that matter, the utter disbelief engendered among those who heard the earliest reports of it.

If the Holocaust was exceptional in history, the literary imagination likewise never conceived situ-

ations or images equal to the actuality of the events themselves. Even the modernist movement's most flamboyant and surrealistic celebrations of violence, like Artaud's Theater of Cruelty, Marinetti's gun-toting Futurism, or Celine's journeys to the end of nihilism, failed to anticipate the precise shape of the Nazi war against the Jews. Nor, despite the endeavors of critics like George Steiner to draw a connection, do Kafka's bureaucratic nightmares approach the infinitely darker logic that came to full expression in the Holocaust.

The exceptional quality of that logic, in whose name the most extreme cruelties were committed and suffered as routine activities of daily existence, has rendered the Holocaust a kind of anomaly, as though there still remains something unbelievable in the fact that it transpired within the ordinary course of human history. And the same exceptional quality has also frustrated nearly every attempt over the past thirty years, on the part of philosophers, theologians, critics, and artists alike, to discover within the Holocaust some universal significance.

The intractability of the events themselves, their resistance to all efforts of the imagination to apprehend them, becomes most evident first in the written record of the Holocaust, in the documents composed during the war by both Germans and Jews, and in the autobiographical memoirs and depositions made in its aftermath. All such accounts bear the imprint of the particular meaning which the author discovered for himself within the terms of his own experience, yet these individual meanings tend to be eclipsed by the immense spectacle of six million dead. On the other hand, the bare statement of the main facts, the mere recitation of atrocity, is likely to appear too implausible to be believed; it rebounds off the imagination, leaving scarcely a trace.

The amount of documentary material dating from the Holocaust, both German and Jewish, is staggering—more than fifteen million pages. In *A Holocaust Reader*,† an anthology of primary documents prepared as a companion volume to her magisterial study, *The War Against the Jews*, Lucy S. Dawidowicz has now provided a clear and definitive guide to this literature. As Mrs. Dawidowicz

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*"The Literature of the Holocaust," November 1964.

† Behrman House, 397 pp., \$12.50; paper, \$4.95.

points out in her introduction, virtually all the documents dealing with the Final Solution, from the Jewish side as well as from the German one, are highly ambiguous and problematical, and present special difficulties to the historian who relies on them. The extreme political and social exigencies of the Holocaust forced both Germans and Jews, each for different reasons, to adopt methods of concealment in their writings. Jews as well as Germans employed code-names and euphemisms to disguise the import of their messages. The Jews, moreover, because they understood only too well those locutions which the Nazis were willing to tolerate, were also frequently compelled to utilize an obsequious and accommodating style that imitated Nazi-Deutsch, a language whose syntactical and semantic structures were already designed to distort reality through language.

An even greater obstacle to the historian than the stylistic distortions of these documents are their omissions and silences. The Germans, as is well known, were careful not to refer openly to their extermination of the Jews, a fact which makes Heinrich Himmler's statement about the Final Solution, in a secret speech to the SS, especially revealing: "In our history, this is an *unwritten and never-to-be-written* page of glory" (emphasis added). Similar lacunae characterize the Jewish documents. As Mrs. Dawidowicz remarks, no records exist for some of the most crucial episodes in the Holocaust, none for the relations between the underground movements and the Nazi-appointed Jewish councils, none concerning the actual decisions involving the life and death of the Jews in the ghettos. Still more flagrant distortions arise in documents composed after the war—both in the depositions made by Germans attempting to exonerate themselves from criminal prosecution, and in accounts of Jewish survivors, whose historical accuracy is often marred by political bias, plain sentimentality, or even "existential guilt" over having escaped death.

The incomplete and misleading features of these documents suggest the actual fragmentariness of our knowledge about the Holocaust, as if the story had only been partially retrieved from a secret niche in history—a fact literally true of the Jewish documents, many of which were preserved in clandestine archives. Through judicious selection, Mrs. Dawidowicz has organized the documents in her anthology to provide an "infrastructure" for a historical narrative of the catastrophe, and she has wisely—perhaps for reasons of tact—divided the German and Jewish testimony into two sections, including among the latter secret memoranda, underground poems, and appeals. Yet while the combined power of the two sections on the reader is overwhelming, from the earliest specimens of Nazi anti-Jewish legislation and the painfully quixotic, even naive Jewish responses to them, through the interim stage of ghettoization, to the graphic descriptions of the death camps them-

selves, the course taken by the Holocaust as it emerges from these collected documents seems both inexorable and utterly lacking in logic. This sense of illogic in turn is heightened by the almost awesome disparity between the German and Jewish texts. A report by the SS General Jürgen Stroop, on the one hand, and a long narrative by Yitzhak Zuckerman,* on the other, though they both describe the Warsaw uprising and the destruction of the ghetto, might have been written about two wholly distinct events, or have been composed on two different planets.

PRIMARY documents can never themselves comprise the totality of the historical past, but the special difficulties which historians, relying on such documents, have encountered in formulating even partial explanations of the Holocaust suggest the still greater difficulty confronting anyone who would attempt to understand the human reality behind it. Numerous such attempts have of course been made—theological, philosophical, psychological. Inevitably, most have focused upon the varieties of behavior that emerged within the Nazi death camps, among the victimizers as well as among their victims.

Among the different interpretations the best-known are the psychoanalytic ones, particularly that of Bruno Bettelheim, a survivor himself (though of a labor, not a death, camp), who in *The Informed Heart* tried to show how the concentration camps were deliberately designed not only to murder but to degrade their prisoners psychologically, to reduce them to a state of childlike helplessness which made resistance on their part impossible. Despite the partiality of his views—Bettelheim approved of acts of defiance even though in the circumstances of the camps they were tantamount to suicide, and implicitly criticized prisoners who failed to "resist" in this way—his theory has remained the standard account of behavior in extremity.

In *The Survivor*,† Terrence Des Pres has now attempted an alternative description, in direct repudiation of Bettelheim, on the basis of a systematic study of testimony composed by survivors themselves. From seventy-seven accounts, written by former prisoners in both German and Soviet concentration camps (mostly the former), Des Pres has selected a number of common themes, patterns, and reactions, and through extensive quotation from his sources has constructed a composite voice to describe the anatomy of life in the camps.

As it emerges from his reconstruction, the world of the death camps concealed beneath its surface layer of atrocity an "underlife" of social order in which prisoners collectively resisted the absolute evil oppressing them. Within this substratum of existence, Des Pres discovers a fundamental de-

* Published in COMMENTARY, December 1975, under the title "From the Warsaw Ghetto."

† Oxford, 218 pp., \$10.00.

gency, a "structure of humanness," characterized by symbolic gestures like gift-giving, as well as by acts, like stealing and smuggling, which would be considered criminal in more normative circumstances but which in the camps were crucial to physical, if not to spiritual, survival.

About all this, Des Pres is partly right. Although the point has been made before, it is valuable enough to be repeated: prisoners often helped one another to survive, some even died to do so. Others, however, did not. While the acts of betrayal, theft, and murder, all committed for the sake of survival, are understandably less well documented than those of collective generosity, Des Pres hardly mentions them. In his theory, "naturalness" of existence was *typical* in the death camps, and the primary values of life—conscience, dignity, and the like—were not only affirmed there, but rediscovered for the first time in the modern era. From out of this "naturalness," Des Pres also means to instruct and exhort his reader. This is the polemical aim of his book, which goes beyond the historical specifics of the camps: what survivors learned there, he says, is the basic lesson of human existence, which he defines as "the plain happiness of work and communion with others."

The major effort of this book, an "archaic, quasi-religious" meditation, is thus to make the survivor into a new hero for our time. About the precise nature of this heroism, however, Des Pres is either confused in his mind or so ambivalent as to appear confused. At times he claims that those who survived did so because they *chose* to live, while those who did not failed to make this choice—as if there were no Nazis, as if the most compelling reality in the camps were not murder. At other times Des Pres suggests that survival has a biological foundation—he discovers the essential behavior of the survivor throughout the whole biosphere, from polymers to man—which renders survival a "biological imperative" of life itself. Yet how precisely the same behavior can be both a "biological imperative of life" and a demonstration of heroic choice is a contradiction Des Pres never acknowledges, let alone resolves.

At still other times, Des Pres speaks of the Holocaust as the inevitable consequence of the nihilism at the heart of Western civilization, as the direct result of the "mind-body split" and its attendant negation of biological reality: the survivor in this reading becomes "the first of civilized men to live beyond the compulsions of culture." But in what way survivors, who lived through the Holocaust to reassume a role in culture, can be said to live "beyond the compulsions of culture," Des Pres never explains. And even within the camps themselves, how is it possible that survivors can ever be said to have lived "beyond culture"? Des Pres's own reconstruction of their "underlife" shows it, in fact, to have been strikingly similar to the structure of all civilized societies, unless their "naturalness" sometimes seems a little too good to be natural. Al-

though he remarks elsewhere that "civilization broke down in the camps"—a statement which would seem to conceal some kind of truth beneath its murky abstraction—his accounting for this breakdown does not explain very much. Why, for example, did nihilism, "the destiny of Western culture," not lead to holocausts throughout Western culture? Why did this supposedly inevitable consequence of the "mind-body split" and the deepest evil tendencies of civilization take its form as a genocide of the Jews?

NOT once in his entire book, not in a single quotation from all the testimony of survivors, does Des Pres ever refer to the Jewish identity of his subjects, or to the role—which many of them acknowledge—played by their Jewishness in enabling them to survive. For Des Pres, such facts undoubtedly constitute evidence of a lower order, the order of mere historical evidence. In his version, the Holocaust was actually less a historical reality than a literary one: "Amid the smoke of burning bodies, the great metaphors of world literature were being 'acted out' in terrible fact." And, again: "The camps are there, in Milton's poem, and in Dante's, in the underrealms of Homer and Virgil, in Shakespeare's *Lear*." Des Pres later suggests that literary archetypes of Hell might even have culturally "determined" the camps. The problem with a speculation like this is not its carelessness—in not a single literary archetype of Hell are the tormentors of the damned also human; what is most wrong, even offensive, about it lies in the suggestion that the *significance* of the Holocaust is a literary one. For Des Pres, there seems to be no difference between an imagined terror and a historical one, or between imagining an event and living it. The ultimate thrust behind this presumption is to effect a kind of identification among the survivor, his tormentor, and all the rest of us: "And yes, we are monsters. We are victims. But we are also survivors." Des Pres even has a more personal identification in mind; concluding a section in which he has described the courage and strength of those who "chose" not to despair of life, he writes grandiloquently:

They turned to face the worst straight on, without sentiment or special hope, simply to keep watch over life. . . . As one survivor says, "It was then, faced with this spectacle of physical decay, with death rising like a tide on all sides, that I decided in my mind that I must live." That is the moment of waking, of return; and *this book, as I write, enacts the same resolution, the same kind of turn . . .* [emphasis added].

One might have expected some small qualification in the passage I have italicized—a "similar" instead of the repeated "same"—but it appears that Des Pres really does mean to equate living through Auschwitz with writing a book about it.

THE enthusiastic reception accorded *The Survivor* corroborates the presence of a widespread impulse, one which the book faithfully serves, to reduce the overwhelming reality of the Holocaust to mere metaphor. This urge is understandable enough: it is a kind of last human stand against the death camps, an attempt to rescue something from the wreckage, to resist the apparently absolute incomprehensibility with which the camps still threaten the imagination. The risks which such attempts run, and the corrupt romantic posturings to which they can lead, are amply demonstrated by Des Pres's book. In contrast, Lawrence L. Langer in *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination** is scrupulously careful not to mistake literature for reality, and never to compare our own world with *l'univers concentrationnaire*—to use the term coined by David Rousset, a non-Jewish survivor, to describe both the death camps' concentrated intensity and the way in which their concentricity isolated them from every value formerly associated with humanity.

Langer's study of Holocaust literature is meant to answer a question: can any literary treatment of the Holocaust do justice to it? Do we not traduce the awful compelling brutality of the events themselves when we presume to mediate them through the devices of the imagination? The question ultimately derives from the controversial statement by Theodor Adorno, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," and Langer is hardly the first to deliberate it. The greater originality of this book lies in its study of the specific literary techniques used by various authors to convey the details of the experience of atrocity; on the basis of these techniques Langer himself defines what he calls "the literature and aesthetics of atrocity."

The aesthetics of atrocity, in Langer's view, begins with the disruption of the classical notion of tragedy, which envisions death as a significant event. Tragedy gives meaning to human suffering by imposing form on violence: losing his sight, Oedipus gains insight, and through his recognition of his moral blindness the audience understands his fate. In this way tragedy always ends by affirming a moral order, according to which even the death of a hero can be made significant. But where the tragic form is predicated upon the existence of this moral order, the literature of atrocity, Langer argues, is predicated upon the total dissolution of such an order—as it was, in fact, dissolved in the camps, where brutality became ordinary and the routine of mass dying displaced individual death. This historical reality both haunts and determines the literature of atrocity. Unlike any other literature, which tries to create anew the world of the usual and familiar, the literature of atrocity works to *disfigure* the sensibilities of its readers, to tear them away from their own world and its securities.

The greater part of *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* is devoted to a series of precise

considerations of the different ways in which novels of atrocity illustrate the impossibility of recreating in full the universe of the Holocaust, yet nevertheless discover a metaphoric language which successfully embodies the discontinuity between the death camps and everyday reality. Thus, in *Mr. Theodore Mundstock*, Ladislav Fuks systematically demonstrates the degree to which the prospect of atrocity can prove more terrifying than its actual experience. In *Herod's Children*, Ilse Aichinger paints a nightmarish, surrealistic world in which all the traditional values of civilization, particularly those which center around childhood, are successively caught up and consumed in the fires of total destruction. In several of his earlier works, Jakov Lind creates an imaginative universe founded upon a unique brand of Holocaust humor verging on hysteria and horror, where tragedy turns into mad comedy.

In all these works—and in some thirteen others, including the poetry of Paul Celan and Nellie Sachs, the novels of Pierre Gascar, Jerzy Kosinski, André Schwarz-Bart, Heinrich Böll, and Jorge Semprun—Langer shows how art, in confronting the Holocaust, ultimately turns into a kind of anti-art: the devices of narrative itself are finally exposed as inadequate to the atrocities. Lacking recourse to the cathartic resolution of tragedy, these books deliberately leave their readers in a state of uncertainty—is what they depict real or fantasy, history or fiction? As Langer remarks, many of the novels themselves resist aesthetic form: through their rough edges, the historical atrocity persistently seeps in. But then, he argues, a cruel and ugly age requires a cruel and ugly art, and quotes one of Jakov Lind's characters: "You can't make a better world by spiriting away the shit that's lying around the country with high-sounding words."

Langer's own discussions of this art are lucid, precise, and neat—perhaps too neat. One fault of the book is that Langer has not recognized the genuine significance of his subject. Because his critical method is almost entirely descriptive, rather than analytical, he never explains why certain novels succeed in capturing the explosive reality of atrocity, while others do not, or—since most of the books he deals with happen to be unusually successful novels in their own right—how they differ. In his recounting, many of these novels sound curiously alike, as though all fictional attempts to recreate a world in which everything was possible might be equally successful, and all in the same way.

Although he is certainly correct that these books prove the exceptional and unprecedented nature of the Holocaust, Langer violates his own premise by attempting to derive from them a general theory, an entire aesthetics of atrocity. In the end his literature of atrocity remains a literature of the

* Yale, 300 pp., \$12.50.

Holocaust, and cannot be removed beyond the edge of the gigantic shadow cast by the camps. As much as the Holocaust itself, the literature of the Holocaust remains absolutely unique—a vocabulary for an unassimilable event, inapplicable to any other.

Finally, even by Langer's definition, the literature of the Holocaust is suffused with a curious paradox: although it never escapes beyond the borders which set *l'univers concentrationnaire* apart from the rest of the world, its special capacity to penetrate this reality derives not from its particular subject, not from the deepest abysses of its trauma, but from the power of the imagination—the power not only to represent the reality of atrocity, but to do what literary art always does: to observe the will in action, to grasp the implications of character, to recreate human society. Which is to say, like literature in general, the literature of the Holocaust is about the dilemmas of moral choice, its temptations, triumphs, and failures.

FOR there to be an exercise of moral choice, however, there must be conditions of choice. It is perhaps for this reason that most successful novels about the Holocaust, nearly all the novels which Langer discusses, surprisingly do not focus directly upon the Jews and their fate but instead linger on the periphery of the camps, on the way to them, or in their aftermath. The protagonists of these books tend to be non-Jews or, occasionally, half-Jews—people against whom, in other words, the most lethal conditions of atrocity were not directed, for whom there *did* exist an authentic choice—to share in the victimization of the Jews, or not to share—and for whom the demands of morality and the exigencies of the historical moment constituted a genuine conflict.

There have, of course, been many serious attempts to deal immediately with the fate of the Jews in the camps—the work of Elie Wiesel is perhaps the outstanding example. Yet even his books constitute only an apparent exception to the rule. To take but one example, there is a climactic episode in Wiesel's semi-fictional memoir, *Night*, in which, Langer writes, "All the feelings which somehow define our world as a 'civilized' place of habitation are sacrificed." The young narrator is describing the execution by hanging of two adult men and another boy who have been convicted of "sabotage" in Auschwitz. "The two adults were no longer alive," he recalls. "Their tongues hung swollen, blue-tinged. But the third rope was still moving; being so light, the child was still alive." The image—one of the most famous in all the literature of the Holocaust—is like a snapshot of atrocity, but its power derives solely from its content, as it was brutally given by the Nazis; there is nothing "imagined" about it (except, perhaps, for the buried allusion to the crucifixion). Yet here, precisely when the experience of atrocity begins to

assault the imagination, Wiesel falls back on rhetoric. Instead of confronting the human brutality, he indicts God. The episode concludes with an older man's questioning the narrator: "Where is God now?" The boy, hearing "a voice within me," responds, "Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows. . . . That night the soup tasted of corpses."

As testimony of the genuine ordeal of faith which every prisoner in the camps endured, Wiesel's book is surely unassailable. But through its failure to move beyond rhetoric, *Night* again suggests the sheer intractability of that experience to the resources of the literary imagination. All the horror and disbelief of the situation are stated, but what comes across is the trauma alone, not the suffering through of a moral dilemma. Even a literature of the Holocaust, if it is to work as literature, must retain at least the bare possibility of moral struggle. Yet this, it would appear, is precisely where the literary imagination falters—before what it sees as the undifferentiated quality of the deaths which the six million died, and the absolute degree of their victimization beforehand.

If the center of the Holocaust always lies somehow just beyond the reach of literature, there are successful treatments of this material that get at the evil circuitously, from the outside. The work of Tadeusz Borowski, a Polish writer who had been a political prisoner in Auschwitz and other camps, is the most powerful example. In a number of stories composed immediately after the war, some of which have now been reissued in English under the title of one of them, *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*,* Borowski succeeds in getting inside the head of a participant in atrocity. The first-person narrator of these stories, and their chief protagonist, *Vorarbeiter* Tadeusz, is a Polish prisoner-of-war and minor *kapo*, or camp functionary; he is solidly entrenched in the camp's inner hierarchy, deep into its corruption, and in a voice of utterly controlled irony, narrates its bizarre routine of atrocity (like the discovery of a new method for burning people alive: "You take four little kids with plenty of hair on their heads," etc., etc.).

Although Borowski himself is said to have behaved with great courage in the camps, his choice of narrator and subject matter clearly indicates a decision to accept moral responsibility for the atrocities which he witnessed. Because of their blunt message—"There is no crime that a man will not commit in order to save himself"—no one comes out of these stories entirely clean, not even the Jews, who are either seen to be as corrupt as the non-Jews or who harbor all the dreams, messianic visions, and demands for justice that these stories aim to expose as sentimental baggage. But the brunt of responsibility is borne by the narrator

* Selected and translated by Barbara Vedder, introduction by Jan Kott, Penguin, 180 pp., \$2.95.

himself, who undertakes an effort of self-degradation as brutal and almost as chilling as the stories he tells. The title story, "This Way for the Gas,"* describes Tadeusz's initiation into atrocity as he volunteers to help unload the Jews arriving in cattle-cars and direct them to the gas chambers. The heat, the dirty turmoil, the unwillingness of the Jews to comply quietly with his orders, finally overwhelm his sense of detached self-control:

You see, my friend you see, I don't know why, but I am furious, simply furious with these people—furious I must be here with them. I feel no pity. I am not sorry they're going to the gas chamber. Damn them all! I could throw myself at them, beat them with my fists. It must be pathological, I just can't understand.

The intensity of such passages carries a charge that seems, in retrospect, to have persisted in the symbolism surrounding Borowski's suicide in 1951, when he stuck his head inside the gas oven in his apartment, even though the immediate causes behind his death were unrelated to the trauma of his camp experience.

A COMPLETELY different approach to the central problem of the Holocaust, though one just as concentrated and furious as Borowski's, is Michel Tournier's novel *The Ogre*.† This magnificent fairy-tale succeeds in confronting directly, and transmuting into art, the consequences of that experience for the imagination.

Abel Tiffauges, the protagonist of *The Ogre*, is a moose-like giant who, in a thoroughly unpredictable fashion, manages to penetrate the innermost sanctuaries of the Third Reich, and ultimately the institutions for Aryan purity which were the mirror opposites to the concentration camps within the Nazi universe. *The Ogre* traces Tiffauges's strange odyssey through his diary of left-handed "Sinister Writings" and through conventional narrative: his brief period of service in the French army at the beginning of the war as a trainer of carrier-pigeons, then his adventures as a prisoner-of-war among the Germans, first as forester in the private hunting-preserve of Hermann Goering, and finally as chief assistant in a Napola or paramilitary school intended to educate and produce the future elite of the Third Reich from the most "perfectly" Aryan youth.

Incident by incident, Tiffauges's descent into "the bestiary of East Prussia" corresponds to the downfall of the Third Reich; each ring of his descent takes Tiffauges, a gentle ogre, into a world of genuine ogres—Goering, the Ogre of Romin-ten, and later Hitler himself, the Ogre of Kaltenborn, to whom every year the German people pre-

sent a whole generation of children as a birthday present. Against this descent, which culminates in the destruction of the Napola and its army of children by the Russians, Tournier juxtaposes an elaborate, stunningly contrived system of eschatological signs, as read through the deep eyes of Tiffauges, who is convinced both that the entire war presages the apocalypse and that his own fate is intimately linked to the fate of the world. The complexity of Tiffauges's eschatology, with its signs mediated by inversions both malign and benign, defies summary, but its basic element is the legend of St. Christopher, upon whom Tiffauges models himself, emulating the act of carrying, *phoria*, through which Christopher earned his sainthood when he bore the infant Christ upon his shoulders across an unnavigable river. As the defeat of the Germans comes nearer, Tiffauges's symbolic system condenses into historical fact, into the specific shape of the Holocaust. Tiffauges rescues a Jewish child who has escaped Auschwitz, and from him learns about the existence of the death camps. Simultaneously, Tiffauges recognizes that the child, Ephraim, is even more densely inhabited by fate than himself, and that Auschwitz is the absolute malign inversion of the entire symbolic system invented in his imagination—"an infernal city remorselessly building up which corresponded stone by stone to the phoric city he himself had dreamed of . . . reflected in the horrible mirror, inverted and raised to hellish incandescence."

Through the juxtaposition of Tiffauges's personal odyssey, culminating in the appearance of Ephraim and his revelation of the existence of the death camps, with the system of apocalyptic symbols which Tiffauges invents, Tournier has created an authentic allegory of the relation between history and literature, between the Holocaust and the modern imagination. Tiffauges is a kind of mad symbolist poet let loose in the world, making out of history an ingenious poem, without the slightest inkling that the "poem" will finally collapse into reality, into the shape of Auschwitz. As Tiffauges bears Ephraim on his shoulders out of the Napola—it is fittingly enough the first night of Passover—*The Ogre*, a novel about the apocalypse, becomes as well a novel about the possibilities of redemption. In its latent messianism, with Tiffauges literally turning himself and history into a vehicle for the destiny of the Jews, the book becomes a kind of liturgical poem of lamentation, though of a highly secularized sort, faithful at once to the unspoken demands of Jewish history, and to the unyielding requirements of the tragic imagination.

* First published in COMMENTARY, July 1962.

† Translated from the French by Barbara Bray, Doubleday, 375 pp., \$7.95; paper (Dell), \$1.50.

Bertrand Russell the Man

Sidney Hook

THE publication of three books on Bertrand Russell*—one by his second wife, one by their daughter, and one by an admiring but honest biographer—hard on the appearance of Russell's three-volume *Autobiography* gives us more details about Russell's life and loves than about any philosopher who has ever lived. And it is still not the whole story. What Russell's own account has lacked in candor, Ronald Clark has made up in large part. Those who are concerned about Russell's image might well hope we will be spared further revelations about the events and intimacies of his life.

This profusion of biographical detail is rather puzzling if we think of Russell's achievement as a professional philosopher. Neither the validity of his ideas nor even their significance depends in any way upon the startling details of his domestic and public life, and the bizarre record, both comic and cruel, of his multiple extramarital adventures. Russell's place in the history of philosophy is secure just as much as is Wagner's in the history of music. But anyone who expects to learn why, or to deepen his insight into Russell's contributions by reading these biographies, will be disappointed. Only Clark's book makes passing references to Russell's work in philosophy but hardly attempts to do it justice. A dozen other volumes are available for its critical assessment, and happily they ignore biographical details.

Why, then, should these volumes,

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each in its own way, have such a disillusioning effect upon those who, for all their philosophical and political differences with Russell, have admired his intellectual brilliance, his expository clarity, and his critical gifts? These gifts were in evidence not only in the assessment of the doctrines of other thinkers but in his readiness to abandon one philosophical position after another in his own quest for a set of basic ideas that would make sense of human experience, the place of scientific knowledge in it, and the nature of the good life in the good society. No matter what the character of Russell's life, why should it make a difference to our evaluation of any of the views he professed?

The reason, it seems to me, is this: Russell set himself up in the public eye as more than a professional philosopher concerned with the solution of technical problems, some of which had come down from antiquity. For the greater part of his adult life, he played and enjoyed the role of a moral teacher, of a sage passionately concerned with the fate and sufferings of his fellow man, of an enlightened dispenser of wisdom about human freedom, peace, love, education, and the upbringing of children. The discovery that the moralist has failed to live up to his own precepts destroys faith in his sincerity, creates doubt about the principles he offers as guides, and deprives him of the authenticity—and the moral authority—that accrues to any person who seems willing to stake his life or reputation on his beliefs.

Who would have imagined, for example, that Bertrand Russell could have been touched by anti-Semitism? Writing to Lady Ottoline Morrell, one of his mistresses, about the social hardships he endured be-

ing lionized during one of his very profitable lecture tours in the United States, he confides: "I can't imagine how I survived. In New York I stayed with a philosopher, Kallen, a Jew, whose friends are all Jews. All were kind, but I began to long for the uncircumcised. New York is mainly Jewish."

When he makes derogatory references to millionaires, it is always to "Jewish millionaires"—never to English or American or Indian millionaires who are much more numerous. Earlier, in writing to Lady Ottoline about his disillusionment with Bolshevism, he refers to its tyrannical bureaucracy, "with a spy system more elaborate and terrible than the Czar's, and an aristocracy as insolent and unfeeling, composed of Americanized Jews [*sic!*] . . . Imagine yourself governed in every detail by a mixture of Sidney Webb and Rufus Isaacs." (The mention of "Americanized Jews" is characteristically inaccurate. By stretching, it could only fit one man in Russia at the time—Boris Reinstein, whom Russell did not meet.)

Clark is obviously embarrassed by passages of this kind. After citing Leonard Woolf's caustic remark that in such sentences Russell enjoyed "the best of all his worlds—dislike and hatred of Americans, Jews, and even his personal friends," Clark adds: "The accusation is less unfair than it sounds. In no sense an anti-Semite . . . Russell nevertheless sometimes exhibited a personal allergy to Jews which is betrayed in his private correspondence from time to time, lasted until the 1930's, and should not be brushed under the carpet"—which he promptly proceeds to do by calling attention to the fact that after Hitler, Russell's personal allergy to Jews was kept in check and that he approved the creation of a Jewish state. Three hundred pages,

* *The Life of Bertrand Russell*, by Ronald W. Clark, Knopf, 766 pp., \$15.00; *The Tamarisk Tree*, by Dora Russell, Putnam, 304 pp., \$9.95; *My Father Bertrand Russell*, by Katherine Tait, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 211 pp., \$8.95.

and twenty-two years later (1970), in the last political statement of his life, Russell delivered himself of a blistering attack against Israel for its "aggression" against Egypt. Clark refers to it with characteristic distress and understatement as "in some ways the most remarkable of his many statements"—remarkable for faulty judgment and irresponsibility.

BUT this streak of anti-Semitism in Russell is far from the most surprising blemish revealed in Clark's biography. To me his most shattering pages are the account of Russell's jail sentence during World War I. It was the news of his imprisonment and the reading of his *Justice in War Times*, while I was a high-school student, that inspired in me the beginning of a lifelong interest in Russell's thought. His behavior seemed a matchless act of intellectual and moral courage. Although not a principled pacifist, Russell staunchly defended the rights of conscientious objectors. The British government, recognizing their scruples, had offered them alternative service in a peaceful non-military pursuit of national importance. Those who refused to compromise in any way, and rejected all forms of alternative service, were called Absolutists and were jailed. Russell was a strong supporter of the Absolutist position.

In 1918 Russell was convicted by a foolish English court for making some foolish remarks about the possible use of American expeditionary forces to break strikes and "shoot down strikers." He was sentenced to six months in the Second Division—where ordinary prisoners were sent. In an effort to escape his prison sentence, he proposed that Gilbert Murray and other friends approach the Tribunal and in his behalf plead that his work in philosophy be regarded as alternative service in the national interest, thus giving him exemption from a jail sentence.

Such a proposal, coming from one who had urged the Absolutists to refuse any alternative service of national importance and insist upon serving jail terms—in those days under conditions extremely prejudicial to their health—was an extraordi-

nary piece of hypocrisy. Nothing came of it. Russell then proceeded to pull strings—which every truly conscientious objector would have scorned to do—to arrange that he should serve his sentence, not in the Second Division, which was organized on a very harsh regimen, but in the First. The aid of Lord Haldane, Lord Balfour, and Herbert Samuel, the Home Secretary—all of whom he personally despised—was invoked, together with that of his blustering brother, Frank, the then Lord Russell. The consequence was that, as Clark puts it, Russell "served his sentence as an aristocrat of the prison world." It was more like living in a hotel than a jail—he was allowed his own food, the opportunity to do his own work, special visits, the services of another prisoner as servant to relieve him "from the performance of unaccustomed tasks or offices." There were hardships, to be sure. "He was worried by the ban on smoking, but agreed to settle for chocolate as compensation."

The simple truth is that Russell enjoyed the appearance of martyrdom but suffered hardly more than he did fifty years later when he again defied the law under the glare of a stage-managed publicity that cost him nothing. In the 1960's he was treated by the authorities as a national treasure. His defiance was much more a form of theater for ego satisfaction than a rational and effective means of furthering a cause. In 1918 he took a taxi to Brixton prison, annoyed that the authorities had not arranged for a Black Maria which would have been a grand occasion for massive press coverage. Under the circumstances, many persons with a cause would have been happy to pay the authorities considerable money for this kind of martyrdom. Thought of his own comfort was rarely absent from his plans. "When Russell protest sat," Clark tells us, "he insured that there was an ingenious air-cushion in his trousers."

IN THE complex entanglement of social and political affairs, to hold to a particular policy regardless of consequences and the unexpected development of events is a mark of fanaticism. It betokens a religious

rather than a rational or scientific approach to politics. And like other thinkers who refused to make a religion out of their politics, Russell changed his views on important matters of public policy often.

But in contradistinction to his change of mind on philosophical questions, he had a tendency to personalize the political positions he abandoned and to heap unmeasured abuse upon those who advocated views not far removed from those he himself had once advanced. They were not honestly mistaken but evil, cruel, corrupt men. Russell himself had gone from imperialism to pacifism to a defense of just war but was mordant about those who did not share his views when he held them. The earliest and most ruthless advocate of a preventive war against the Soviet Union, he was prepared to sacrifice all of Western Europe and almost a half-billion lives for Communist defeat. But at the time of the Cuban missile crisis, because they stood up to Khrushchev, he denounced Kennedy and Macmillan as "wicked and abominable . . . much more wicked than Hitler . . . the wickedest people that ever lived on earth."

When this absurd comparison backfired and the noise of indignation it provoked made him appear ridiculous even to some of his own supporters, he claimed he had been quoted out of context. This, as Clark painfully documents, was not the only untruth of which he was guilty. For a period of a decade, whenever it served his purpose, he denied that he had ever supported a preventive war against Russia—"The story . . . is a Communist invention"; then, confronted by the evidence, compelled to admit it, he blurted, "It's entirely true and I don't repent of it"; yet some years after, he pleaded with a correspondent to give "the lie to the fiction that I advocated war against the Soviet Union." As sympathetic as Clark is to Russell, he is aghast at Russell's tergiversations for the good of the cause: "If the suggestion that he deliberately tried to conceal his earlier version is repugnant, the record does not really allow any other conclusion to be drawn."

"A man's inconsistencies," Russell

was fond of saying, "are the clues to his passions." What passions are here at work? Here the good Clark for all his remarkable industry fails us. It is not love of power in the ordinary sense. Although in one of his letters Russell writes that "the love of power is terribly strong in me," the context shows that it was a power to influence people and to make them notice him. But he could have exercised this power without becoming a spokesman for appeasement and surrender to Communism. It cannot be his pacifism, which was never principled with him, as is indicated by his support of the war against Hitler and his willingness to sacrifice a half-billion lives to insure Stalin's downfall. Nor was it his anti-Americanism, a passion which, indeed, ran very deep within him.

The passion that underlay Russell's political inconsistencies and led him not only to hail the ruthless Leninist, Ho Chi Minh, as a fighter for human freedom, but to a stoical resignation to the triumph of Communism on a world scale, was stronger than anti-Americanism. Surprising as it may sound in the light of his fervent expression of love of humanity, it was his hatred of mankind, of its stupidity and viciousness, of its persistent refusal to listen and follow the counsels of wisdom he had offered it throughout his life. This mood is not far below the surface of his emotions when he comments on the ordinary run of political events, and it sometimes bursts forth in letters to his intimates: "I hate the world and above all the people in it . . . I hate the planet and the human race. . . ." More than once he confessed himself ashamed to belong to the human race. No one who felt so keenly about intellectual freedom, human dignity, and the glory of untrammelled inquiry and the right to dissent could have been so calmly resigned to the victory of Communism except as a punishment for a world whose policies had contributed to that victory.

DESPITE its limitations, it will be a long time before Clark's biography will be superseded. There probably will be many more discoveries of

episodes in Russell's transatlantic love life—upstairs and downstairs. But they will add little to our understanding either of his philosophy or politics.

Something must be said of the biographies of Russell by his second wife and their daughter. Dora Black Russell seems to have been the least attractive in every way of Russell's wives and of the other women in his life. Her book is really an apologia, a reply to Russell's own disparaging comments in later life about her mind, character, and political morals. It throws some light on why he was originally drawn to her. She seems to have been his first encounter with the radical chic that put free sex at the center of the life of freedom—including intellectual and cultural freedom. The book also confirms in some measure the account Russell gives of why she became progressively distasteful to him. It is full of boring inconsequential details about her own activities as a feminist and Communist fellow-traveler in order to create the impression that she led an independent life of her own. She is the ideal type of what in the 30's used to be called a "totalitarian liberal." Speaking of her propaganda for feminism, which was more Bohemian than proletarian, she writes with the typical condescension of the middle-class socialist dependent on servants: "As a socialist, I felt that we were a bit too middle class and ought to be doing something to help those proletarians about their sex."

A REFRESHINGLY different book from that of her mother is Katharine Tait's *My Father Bertrand Russell*. It is painstakingly honest, very well written, and full of psychological insight born of suffering and a sense of being unloved. The author was burdened at an early age by the agonizing feeling that she could not live up to the abstract moralistic pieties of her father, whom she adored. At the same time she had an unerring sense for the hollowness of his words and his complete obliviousness to her needs, her fears, and her hopes. She probably expected too much of her parents, but if only a fraction of her story is true, it makes one wonder about their

psychological fitness as enlightened school reformers. What they could not give their own children, they probably could not give other children.

Katharine Tait intuitively sensed the fact that for all his generous help to her and her family, Russell was emotionally detached from them. He could not live up to his own ideals of human relationship because he lacked the capacity for empathetic identification. She was spared the hurt of knowing that, according to one of Patricia Russell's letters to Freda Utley, her father found her "repulsive," but it was his insensitiveness to her ordinary feelings that disillusioned her in his grand words about reforming man and society. She claims to have been cured in consequence, even as a child, of belief in utopian projects and abstract visions of progress. Having lost her faith in her father, she became convinced that there was a Heavenly Father and accepted the vocation of a Christian missionary to spread the glad news of His existence. There is a certain irony, not lost on Russell, in the fact that the author of *Why I Am Not a Christian* should have indirectly contributed to his daughter's conversion to Christianity. That she could not bring herself to explain to Russell the need or the grounds for her belief in something so central to her life, or even to discuss it with him, indicates how great was the failure of communication between them.

Russell once remarked that Socrates was even more lucky than wise in picking the right time and the right way to die. The world cheated Russell out of his martyrdom. In his eightieth year he had become a pillar of the establishment and was rather unhappy about it. Although he did his best soon after to collapse it on its foundations, he escaped the fate of either Socrates or Samson. During the last ten years of his life he appeared in the public eye as a vain and crotchety figure, often manipulated by others. No one knows how posterity will regard him as a social and political thinker. My guess is that whatever the judgment will be, had he not lived so long, it would have been kinder.

Hugh Kenner's Modernism

John Romano

ONE way to describe Hugh Kenner's immense influence as a critic is to say that, to a remarkable extent, he has had to himself the delineation of literary modernism in English. Professor of English at Johns Hopkins, formerly chairman of the Department of English at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Kenner has written more than fifteen books since 1947, as well as dozens of articles and reviews, mainly on aspects of modernism in England, Ireland, and America. Among his gifts are the wit and ease of his style, a conspicuously old-fashioned abundance of learning, and a wealth of curiosity more admirable still. From his New Critical teachers at Yale he inherited the patience to attend infinitely to linguistic detail. Above all, he is that distinctively American desideratum, the "practical" critic. When he is not describing or elucidating works, he is describing or elucidating writers, or literary history. Indeed, he has characterized himself as the author of "x-ray portraits" of men and books, an image which resonates with practical science. An x-ray is a transparency: throughout his work, Kenner has respected the American wish that the critic and his ego remain out of sight.

Among Kenner's works are individual studies of G.K. Chesterton, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, James Joyce, and Samuel Beckett. *Gnomon* (1958) was a collection of essays examining not only the literature of this century, but also the cultural circumstances that have produced and supported it. Ten years later, in *The Counterfeiters*, a "historical comedy," Kenner related the self-conscious artificiality of modern culture to the

philosophical assumptions of the industrial revolution. Like *Bucky: A Guided Tour of Buckminster Fuller* (1973), *The Counterfeiters* demonstrated Kenner's competence and lucidity outside the strictly literary arena, and gave evidence, too, of his profoundly conservative religious and social bias. His most ambitious work, however, is contained in the two volumes of criticism he has produced since 1970: *The Pound Era* (1971) and, most recently, *A Homemade World: The American Modernist Writers*.*

Michael Rosenthal, in the *New York Times Book Review*, has justly assessed the dimensions of Kenner's prestige: "There is no critic who has more firmly established his claim to valuable literary property than has Kenner to the first three decades of the 20th century in English. . . . Kenner bestrides modern literature if not like a colossus, then at least a presence of formidable proportions." No one can claim as much responsibility for the formation of the standard modernist canon—not even Lionel Trilling; who in bearing his complex witness to the modern spirit in literature had in mind something international and arch-romantic, centered in the 19th century. But what does Kenner mean by modernism? There is an insistence, dispersed throughout his work, on the thoroughgoing, essential unity of the great modernists. And yet, while so confining a thing as a definition of modernism is not desirable, the assumptions that govern Kenner's concept of the modern remain oddly dark. It takes an occasion outside routine critical practices to bring them to the surface.

"Ezra Pound, RIP" is a eulogy for the poet that was published in the *National Review* (November 24, 1972). Kenner's *The Pound Era*, which had appeared within a year of the poet's death, was a big book, apparently random and

eclectic, here illuminating an obscure corner of the *Cantos*, there telling and retelling anecdotes with a pleasant air of half-belief, elsewhere establishing Pound's virtual tutorship of Yeats or Eliot. *The Pound Era* has no thesis except the (uncontested) centrality of Pound expressed in its title. "Ezra Pound, RIP," on the other hand, is fewer than five hundred words. In it, Kenner recalls the poet's heartiness at the age of eighty, when they trudged together up a steep incline near Rapallo. Then choice "moments" from the poetry are offered up—among them, this from the *Pisan Cantos*: "Mist covers the breast of Tellus-Helena and drifts up the Arno," and "The reeds are heavy bent;/and the bamboos speak as if weeping." Of these Kenner says:

Such exemptions from the time of mere events are beyond price. Men do not live in that universe of exemption, but men know what is to be men, not brutes, not destroyers, in part because the imagination can live there. Pound was unlucky in the world of events, most of us are, though less so. It was only his miserable involvements with the events of the 1940's that prompted the wire services to chatter so much when he died. Otherwise *that* event would have been worth five lines.

Consistency reigns here, whatever else one may wish to say. If the world as we know it is a world of "mere events," then Italian Fascism is perhaps merely a misfortune; if imagination operates above time and history, in a "universe of exemption," and instructs us from there in the human qualities, then it is fatuous to worry modern literature with the moral questions put by social and political reality. For the proper context of art, in this view, is eternity; if we are wise, the chatter of the wire services—about, say, Mussolini in Ethiopia—will not distract us.

It is not my feeling that Pound's Fascism ought to inhibit our admiration of his poetry, but nothing is accomplished by dismissing it as accidental ("unlucky"?). Indeed, admiration for the *Cantos*, especial-

* Knopf, 221 pp., \$8.95.

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ly, must be formulated with one eye upon the politics. To prate of their irrelevance is surely no compliment to Pound. Actually, Kenner does not everywhere finesse the issue. In *The Pound Era*, he treats the subject in two ways. One is through Pound's economic preoccupation. Major Douglas's radical monetary reformism, thick with a Jeffersonian rhetoric of freedom, had so captured Pound's imagination, the story goes, that he saw in Germany and Italy only the mechanics of their economic recovery, and not their imperialist obsessions. But how then was his attachment to Fascism "unlucky"? It was, rather, a "rational" consequence of Pound's economic thinking.

Moreover, this account leaves out the question of tone, the actually stirring tone of Pound's admiration for the man Mussolini. Here, in the second of the two ways he treats this subject, Kenner is more interesting. Pound had, in the 20's, we learn, cast himself in

the role of Odysseus and the role, simultaneously, of amanuensis for the mind of Europe, itself Odysseus, in desperate straits (wars, inflations) seeking Ithaca, questing as men always are after lost securities that lie somewhere around the rim of a great circle.

And "Mussolini seemed to be helping to rebuild Ithaca." This is no mere saying, "Your honor, my name is Odysseus, sacker of cities." The election of Mussolini to mythic high office, as Kenner knows, was wrong. But

human misjudgment and the closed curve of human vitality which achieved power at least over the *Cantos* should not in their triumph obliterate the pertinence of [Pound's] most radical decision: to experience the poem as he wrote it, himself committed to all of which he wrote, himself Odysseus actually *en route*.

There it is: the "experience" of the poem itself. Before judging Pound, then, we must be apprised of what Kenner in his eulogy calls the "universe of exemption" where Pound's imagination dwells: "around the rim of a great circle." There Mussolini is not the real Mussolini, the Mussolini of "mere events," but

Mussolini the literary analogue, the rebuilder of "Ithaca."

It is with such mystic gauze as this that Kenner has attempted to shroud our perception of the moral and social pertinence of modern literature. In "Ezra Pound, RIP," Pound is paid a reverence rather frightening. He figures there as the almost literally deathless bard. But the figure of most interest in the eulogy is that cut by Kenner himself, in his contempt for the world and its history, in his election to immortality of a poet to speak for God (or from God's vantage point). Kenner's brand of Roman Catholicism is only indirectly at issue here. It is primarily an aesthetic, not a religious mysticism by which Kenner scants Pound's moral confusion, a notion of art's imaginary realm in which even a Mussolini can suffer a sea-change into something rich and strange. In similar fashion, an essay on Yeats in *Gnomon* warns the reader not to mistake Yeats's life, Irish politics, or anything else for the context of his poems:

What we see in this mirror, the page, is reflected from that one, "life"; but the parallel mirrors face each other, and in an infinite series of interreflections life has been acquiring its images from the book only that the book may reflect them again.

Or, in language that will seem familiar:

It is a radical mistake to think of Yeats as a casual or fragmentary poet whose writings float on a current discoverable only in his biographable life. How much time does he not spend telling us that he has carefully rendered the mere events of his life irrelevant? [Emphasis added.]

Reviewing *Gnomon*, Steven Marcus perceived that in such places Kenner is

more like an alchemist or a mathematician than he is like a critic; in his most typical essays he tends to conjure up a totally autonomous, self-referring universe, whose terms have virtually nothing to do with experience, and which functions according to some arcane concoction of rules whose unintelligibility is the safeguard of their inconsequence.*

"Inconsequence," I think, is a wrong emphasis. Kenner's self-reflexive universe may not refer to the real world, but it does have consequences for it. Life, when it is caught up in its own reflection by art, and mirrored in a series of infinite regress, comes to feel that its own reality has been put in question. Under the spell of Kenner's modernism, the security of our grasp on the empirical universe is undermined. But we should not be misled: Kenner has beliefs, ideals, values, which he would substitute for what he takes away. Despite the hocus-pocus, he is convinced of what is real and what is not.

To BEGIN with what, as Kenner sees it, is *not* real. In *A Homemade World* there is a chapter on Hemingway which calls attention to two passages in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. In the first, Robert Jordan makes love to his Spanish girlfriend, Maria. The dialogue is not brilliant: "Maria." "Yes." "Maria." "Yes." The second is Jordan recalling smells:

Which would you rather smell? Sweet grass the Indians used in their blankets? Smoked leather? The odor of the ground in the spring after rain? The smell of the sea as you walk through the gorse on a headland in Galicia? Or the wind from the land as you come in toward Cuba in the dark? That was the odor of the cactus flowers, mimosa, and the sea-grape shrubs.

Hemingway's novel has come to seem, to many people, somewhat uneasy on its feet, but one would have thought that this particular passage was likely to survive the general wreck. As it turns out, it will only survive for those who like the way the world smells. As for Kenner, who does not, he can only see Jordan, whom he disdains to an extent that is actually comical, floundering among "mere" women, "mere" oceans, flowers, land. Hemingway's Galicia and mimosa, along with the brute indulgences of Maria, send Kenner back to a less vulgar American, Henry James. He admits that a James character said

* My debt to this review is apparent. It has been reprinted as "Three Obsessed Critics" in Marcus's collection, *Representations*.

once, "Live all you can; it's a mistake not to." "But James," he goes on, "meant more by 'Live!,' one cannot help thinking, than the knack of so arranging one's priorities that one would one day have a girl and the memory of smells." Kenner writes of the horror that James would have felt at a novelist like Hemingway, "for whom thirty centuries of civilization, all the long effort since Homer and Thucydides, has [*sic*] for its quintessence" only such messiness as this scene in Galicia.

Kenner must own a unique edition of Homer, since most are full of soldiers who make love to women in far-off lands, as Robert Jordan is fond of doing. Not that Hemingway is Homer. But who is Henry James? Surely he is that character in *Gnomon*, *The Pound Era*, and *A Homemade World* who stands in those books for something called the "aristocratic tradition" in American letters. In elucidating what *that* is we stand to learn what Kenner calls real, since the beautiful Maria is not. And in making explicit his sense of James, we may come to terms with that adulation of patrician manners which is often mistaken, in Kenner's writing, for conservatism.

A Homemade World is in some ways a departure for Kenner. It has been his practice to return again and again to the same writers throughout his career—with deepening knowledge and insight, when he is at all right to begin with. On only one of the nine writers treated in the new book has Kenner committed himself frequently or at any length before now. William Carlos Williams, the exception, is also one of the few non-expatriated moderns who has interested Kenner, himself a Canadian living in the United States for many years. Three virtues of the new book should at once be noted. First, after the Poundian complexity of *The Pound Era*, it is wonderfully lucid. Secondly, it contains moments of great incisiveness, fixed with great wit, as when he says of Marianne Moore that she has "never allowed a fear of being thought poetic to deter her from accuracy."

Thirdly, it has, more palpably

than the earlier books, a thesis: American modernism has involved a "fifty-year re-shaping of the language." Americans have seized upon the realization, which "has been suspected in other times and places" but never before "felt in a whole people's bones," that "language is something arbitrary, something *external* both to the speakers who use it and to the phenomena they hope to denote"; consequently, that language "is less a heritage than a code, and a code, moreover, that we are free to change." According to Kenner, the project of American writers in this century has been to exploit this freedom—freedom from history, from representational use—and to construct utterances and fictions "of the arbitrary." Because the words of which they are comprised are cut off from the world they had formerly been supposed to represent, the poems and novels so produced are radically artificial and thinglike: thus, "homemade."

The irony of this argument, as well as its ingenuity, consists partly in the unlikelihood of Kenner's examples. The exploitation of a freed language he sees consummated in the poetry of Williams, who to all appearances bound his words tightly to the work of describing the world:

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain

Kenner's point about this poem is the surprising one that "it is impossible to imagine an occasion for [the] sentence to be said," unless it be "the gush of an arty female on a tour of Farmer Brown's barnyard."

Kenner is a clever man. In our enjoyment of his "arty female," he has caused the wheelbarrow to vanish, and we may find we have joined him in his scorn for the possibility that anyone ever felt on his senses a bright wet barnyard after a rain. But Kenner has larger things than this to say of the "homemade world" of American literature. American poems, he says, enter

a world of things made, strange

things, radial tires, lunar modules, combination locks, plastic bottles, disposable lighters, but not "aesthetic" things: not, for instance, statues. When Williams . . . called a poem a "machine made out of words," he was setting it in the field where America's prime energies have been expended ever since Henry Ford. The good life is no longer mocked by the "machine in the garden," the good life is realized by means of the machine: intelligence impressed on matter. It is a sentimental playing on little pipes for the poet to pretend otherwise.

Here Kenner can be understood as intending three kinds of art. The "playing on little pipes" is the art of the naive primitivist: Gary Snyder is Kenner's (quite good) example. Another kind, the kind he has been describing, is the art of the "homemade" artifact, which he asserts is appropriate to the American culture that produces it. But a third is the art of "aesthetic" things—for instance, "statues." Enter here Henry James, the James of Pound's imagination, one of "the old men with beautiful manners" who "will not come again."

"Who is left now who knew Henry James?" Kenner mourns at Pound's passing. Behind James stand Paine, the Lowells, the Adams family, all that to which James was heir. Embodied in him was the prospect of an aristocratic moment in American literature. But he went where he could be more at home, to Europe, where culture was "simply environment." "If there was a copy of Homer in Connecticut, it was because someone had decided to bring it along, or send for it," says Kenner. (Whereas they grow beside the Arno, like mimosa?) And so James left behind "Whitman's multitudes," and in so doing set a pattern. Eliot, too, left, fled the women and the smells, to where he could write "The Waste Land," which is not, Kenner tells us, "homemade," but the real thing, like statues. No one who stayed behind managed to apply to any good purpose the evident meaning of James and of the worship of "culture": that what is most civilized is what is most real.

It would be interesting to see an interpretation of a James novel by Hugh Kenner. He may find, if he approaches the text in innocence, that it is difficult to bear out (except in anecdotes of James's personal elegance) his apparent view that James is unequivocal about the cultivated virtues; for instance, about the capacity, even of extremely well-born types, to rise above the nastiness of physical necessity. There is a scene in *The Golden Bowl* in which Charlotte Verver, in her first explicitly adulterous interlude with the Prince, finds herself explaining the arrangement of carriages by which she knew that his wife was out. Suddenly her craftiness embarrasses her, and she tries to smile it away: "It's not a question," she says, "of a carriage the more or the less. It's not a question, even, if you come to that, of a cab. It's so beautiful . . . that it's not a question of anything vulgar or horrid." But the context gives her arrogance the lie: she and the Prince can by no pretense of "beauty" rise above the dodging or catching of carriages, the watching of shadows, if they are to pursue the intended expression of their human nature.

KENNER's reading of Eliot is another matter. His most recent pronouncements, in *The Pound Era*, show a supercilious interest in Eliot as a neo-Jamesian dandy. But there is also evidence, from the general excellence of his 1959 volume, *The Invisible Poet*, that Eliot is the writer to whom Kenner is closest spiritually. The terms of their revolt against the modern age are strikingly alike, particularly in their contempt for those emotional realities of human existence which the Romantic era had taught the world to celebrate. We owe to Kenner the most pessimistic view of the meaning of "The Waste Land," a view which has always seemed to me, at least, accurate.

We owe to Kenner too, however, the less defensible notion that "The Waste Land" is the ur-text of modernism (as David Thorburn has put it), and Kenner has contributed to the opinion as well that Joyce's *Ulysses* is likewise founded on the same unambiguous Eliotic

disdain for contemporary man. It is here that Kenner's unspoken assumptions have been most misleading. As a critic, he is by temperament deaf to the note of real affirmation or triumph in any work, even when the note of affirmation would seem hard to miss, as in "Some Friends from Pascalouga," one of the most beautiful poems Wallace Stevens ever wrote:

Tell me more of the eagle,
Cotton,
And you, black Sly,
Tell me how he descended
Out of the morning sky.

There follow four stanzas of the eagle descending, "his heavy wings/Spread on the sun-bronzed air." True, this is a fiction: there are no eagles in Stevens's Hartford, and few left anywhere, but their flight is here in the poem, told once and forever. Kenner's insensitivity to this poem should be preserved in a neurological wax museum. The lovely names Cotton and Sly he finds boring, for they "are both names in any decent-sized telephone book," and the talk in the poem is of eagles, he makes out, because it "may as well be of a bird's descent as anything."

It is true that such affirmation as is expressed in modern literature is more often of a kind that takes much listening and a good ear. It is never more than partial, but it takes what glory it has from the very fact of its partialness and impermanence. If we need anything from critics of modernism, it is help in discerning this neglected and suppressed affirming strain.

IN THE summer of 1974 Lionel Trilling began an address to the Aspen Institute by saying that "at the present time in American society, there are few factors to be perceived, if any at all, which make it likely that within the next quarter-century there will be articulated in a convincing and effectual way an educational ideal that has a positive and significant connection with the humanistic educational traditions of the past." His remarks did not grow more hopeful as they continued. Can one then say that Trilling reflected that despair of a contemporary prospect of cultural

renewal, attended faintly by nostalgia, which Kenner has made the principal sign of the high modern sensibility? One recalls Kenner's cynical lament that Homer is not a part of the natural environment in Connecticut; or his recollection of James's wardrobe; or his sneers at the rabble who applaud Whitman and scorn Wyndham Lewis. Clearly there is a need for discriminating among ways of championing "high culture."

Kenner has been much associated with the Catholic Right: apparently he is its Minister of Literary Culture. But as such he has set himself the most thankless and ill-conceived of tasks. Tacitly, implicitly, he urges on his audience the advantages of a cultural aristocracy, and derides the democratic assumptions of their imagination. He even pretends—what leads to grotesque distortions, resembling Pound's praise for Van Buren—that our literary tradition is really one of natural aristocrats gone astray accidentally, if permanently. He wishes on America the elevated European languors of art: literature as privilege. These are the terms in which he summons his readers to the classics.

And it is here that Kenner's career has its sharp relevance for problems of definition facing American conservatism. The predicament that he epitomizes has been admirably caught by John Diggins in *Up from Communism*:

The American conservative . . . must find his ideological roots in America's historical experience. As a body of principles, conservatism cannot be created *ex nihilo* and instilled into society; rather it develops organically from the wisdom of the ages. When the *National Review* intellectual turns to the American past, however, he finds himself in the awkward role of the anti-liberal conservative trying to conserve liberalism.

Trilling's path, by contrast, leads him into a different contradiction, one less oppressive and even suggestive of hope. He refers in the Aspen paper to a book in which members of the urban working class are cited who feel a challenge to themselves and to their children

"to become 'cultured,' in the intellectual's sense of that word." Trilling remarks:

If, following [this] lead, I suggest that there is an affinity between the way in which higher education is conceived by traditional humanism and the way in which it is conceived, instinctually as it

were, by a significant group of uneducated people who want to be educated, have I not in effect said that the educational ideal of traditional humanism can count upon being ceaselessly sustained and renewed?

Trilling is ultimately unable to respond in the affirmative to this

question, but it is instructive to see him entertain the proposition in the first place, because in doing so he is explicitly seeking a democratic basis for the establishment of a learned culture in America. Whatever its degree of improbability, such a basis is the only one our tradition gives us a right to expect.

Movies

From the Potomac to the Missouri

William S. Pechter

SOME years before Richard Nixon became President, Robert Osborn drew a picture of him that remains to this day a masterpiece of political caricature. From familiar widow's peak to jowls, the likeness is perfect, and in our certain recognition of its unmistakable subject lies the portrait's comment. For the face is a blank; there isn't a single feature drawn on it.

How do you make a movie about a man with no face? *All the President's Men* struggles to find the answer. What was "Watergate"? "I guess [it's] just a piece in a jigsaw puzzle, a missing piece," the investigative reporter in *Citizen Kane* finally says of "Rosebud," but, by the time he says it, Charles Foster Kane, if ultimately unexplained, has at least a (multifaceted) character, no less a face. With *All the President's Men*, it's the film itself that seems like a puzzle with a piece missing—the main piece. It's like *Citizen Kane* without, not only Rosebud, but Kane himself, and yet obviously pressing on, doggedly gathering facts and checking sources. Here, indeed, is Watergate with a cast omitting not only

Nixon but (except for mention of them, or an occasional voice on the phone) such figures as Mitchell, Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Colson, Dean, Magruder, McCord, not to say Ervin, Baker, Gurney, and the rest. (Legal problems may partly explain this, as may the problems of having actors portray people with familiar faces; in any case, the one "celebrity" we're shown, like a dog thrown a bone, is Hugh Sloan.) Here is Watergate seen as Woodward and Bernstein toppling the government, with its main drama that of whether they'll be able to confirm each leak with a second source so as not to embarrass the *Washington Post* while still getting into print in time to scoop the competition: Watergate as an Aesopian fable of ant felling elephant. Indeed, the film's events and the tunnel vision through which it perceives them seem at times so wildly disproportionate as to give rise to the reflection that, if *Citizen Kane* really is, as Pauline Kael characterizes it, the last of the 30's newspaper comedies, it had better move over and make room for this inadvertent successor.

Of course, this is a film to which we—all of us—bring so much that it's easy not to notice how little it gives in return: how narrow its scope, how humdrum its heroes' feats of detection. To be sure, it's engrossing—how could it not be? But far from its being a case, as the blurbs would have it, of a thriller whose suspense is undiminished by our knowing how it will turn out, it takes all our knowledge of the outcome to sustain an interest in the details of the reporter-heroes' laborious acquisition of each bit of information. (What waste, in any case, that, given the opportunity and even the need for a dramatic work that might order and memorialize Watergate, we've been offered the perspective of a mere detective thriller and not that of some truly political spectacle.) And given the hunger with which we Watergate addicts crave a new fix, there's a tendency to be excessively grateful for what the film doesn't do: for its relative abstention from the sensationalizing or glamorizing of its materials.

Despite its perpetuation of the self-righteous David-versus-Goliath

myth, the depiction of newsroom talk is *Front Page*-salty, and nowhere (except, perhaps, for a bit of phrase-making in a speech near the end by Jason Robards as Ben Bradlee) is there the sort of pious genuflection toward the beacon of journalism that one finds in the conclusion of *Three Days of the Condor*, when that film, in effect, drops reverentially to its knees before the offices of the New York *Times*. Nor is there the manipulative playing on our pervasive paranoia about political conspiracies that one finds in that film or in *The Parallax View*. All is deliberate sobriety, and stylistic restraint (the asceticism extends to Gordon Willis's customarily rich photography, which here rests on one simple, recurrent contrast between the brightly-lit arena of truth and reason inside the offices of the Washington *Post*, and the world of dark shadows everywhere outside them). The film's one stylistic flourish, a \$90,000 crane shot of the reporters assiduously plowing through documents in the Library of Congress, is, as the film's director has stated, intended only to convey the "tedium" of the heroes' undertaking.

BUT these are negative virtues, albeit somewhat surprising ones given that the film's star, Robert Redford, is the star of *Three Days of the Condor*, and its director, Alan J. Pakula, is the director of *The Parallax View* (and *Klute*), and something of a specialist in communicating paranoia and creating a near-hysterical mood of fearful anxiety. For here is a film about a *proven* governmental conspiracy which leaves one feeling more reassured than anxiously fearful. No doubt there was a decision deliberately to play down such emotions for respectability's sake. But one senses that, at some point, the filmmakers began to realize they were succeeding only too well in that regard, and that they'd better try to drum up some excitement and inject a little drama into the drudgery. And so the luridly melodramatic but curiously ineffectual trappings surrounding the several meetings with Deep Throat, Woodward's and Bernstein's anonymous chief informant, and the uncon-

vincing fear for their lives supposedly felt by the various members of CREEP whom the reporters, during a lengthy sequence of nocturnal visits, try to get to talk (not to mention the alleged threats to the lives of the reporters themselves, which can hardly strike fear at the very moment the real Woodward and Bernstein are so visibly in the eye of the media, flogging their new book).

Yet a worker from CREEP does finally talk (and isn't murdered), as do the FBI, and, above all, Deep Throat; and one is finally struck less by any conspiracy of silence than by the elaborate rituals by which those who talk seek to evade the stigma of informer. And even in this self-serving view of Watergate, it seems clear that it's this informing (although done first before grand juries, not to reporters) rather than any prodigies of detection that cracked the case: Woodward and Bernstein simply persisting in their interrogations, and then in putting two and two together. The main image the film seeks to create—from the first shot of words being typed, the striking of the typewriter keys sounding like rifle shots, to the last when wire-service reports of the fall of the Nixon administration issue from the teletype with a clatter like machine-gun fire—is of the righteous power of the press: of our freedoms hanging in the balance, and being saved by a pair of investigative reporters. The impression one is left with, instead, is that the fate of the nation rests in the hands of some unidentified insider, finally telling all he knows in the shadowy recesses of a Washington garage. Edward Jay Epstein has written persuasively on the mythology of the press's role in exposing Watergate in the face of a supposedly hostile and monolithic government,* and, though he may underestimate the beneficial effect of the press's getting a story before the public in preventing one governmental agency from quashing the investigations of another, the fact remains that, even here, news is leaked by individuals within government so as to serve and protect their agencies' interests. And so one wonders all the more about the

crucial questions: who (if anyone) is Deep Throat, and what were his motives?

But this, of course, is something the film is unwilling or unable to divulge, and so one is thrown back on the paradox that here we have a depiction of the unmasking of a true conspiracy, done by film-makers sympathetic to conspiracy theory, that is nevertheless oddly deficient in conveying a sense of conspiratorial menace. That we know how the story ends doesn't seem explanation enough. Rather, despite its thriller trappings, the film seems unable to get around the fact that our common perception (via our common experience) of this conspiracy story is unalterably not one of detective-reporters on the trail of CIA-caused massacres or mysterious assassination networks, but—through such public spectacles as the televised hearings and the White House transcripts—one of the conspirators' own desperate ineffectiveness, and of the high and the mighty brought low. Here, exposed, is an actual conspiracy, and one leading directly to the Oval Office, and yet the President himself, with all the agencies of government supposedly at his disposal, was unable to prevent its disclosure to the public. (To be sure, its disclosure did involve a series of blunders, and without the "smoking gun" of the tapes, impeachment might have remained a much less immediate threat, but, even short of impeachment, it seems clear that the Nixon administration would have been left a shambles.) And for all the conspiracy demonology, the evil geniuses for whom the Oswalds and Arthur Bremers are merely pathetic patsies, there, in the White House, was not Richard III but the man with no face.

GIVEN that in his last movie, *Night Moves*, Arthur Penn sabotaged an intelligent script by inflating it into a statement on post-Watergate America, there's some satisfaction to be had in seeing Penn's latest film, *The Missouri Breaks*, fall victim to what one might call screenwriter's revenge. Its writer is

* "Did the Press Uncover Watergate?," COMMENTARY, July 1974.

Thomas McGuane, a young novelist whose previous experience in films has been as writer of *Rancho Deluxe* (directed by Frank Perry) and writer-director of *Ninety-two in the Shade* (adapted from his novel), and it's perhaps no small achievement (especially given complaints McGuane has voiced recently about clashing temperaments among the other principals) that he's managed to take this blockbuster project, with its meeting of the titans between Marlon Brando and Jack Nicholson, and give it his earlier work's stamp of an eccentric little movie. The achievement, however, ends there. Like his earlier work, *The Missouri Breaks* is a bead-stringing succession of striking scenes, full of a willful eccentricity and preening wit, all of which adds up to nothing more than the self-conscious cleverness of some merry prankster. Worse, a snobbish and cruel prankster, with a blanket scorn for all those who don't share his (and his heroes') flippancy. In the world of McGuane's films, the many exist for the privileged few to humiliate them (with some occasional diversion in the slaughtering of animals); the sense is of some cliquish, prep-school brotherhood finding amusement in tearing the wings off flies. Moreover, the repertory of pranks is soon seen to be small. Already this is the second McGuane film to revolve around free-spirited rustlers trying to elude the oppressive weight of "law and order" brought to bear on them, as well as the second to hinge on a war of nerves between coolly smiling rivals.

Yet, luckily, the script of the *The Missouri Breaks* gets a surprising and inestimable lift from one stunning job of rewrite—by Brando. Much as I began, some time ago, looking forward with curiosity to the outcome of the meeting of Brando and Nicholson, there was little encouragement to be found in news that Brando was fat (somehow there had come to seem a correlation between his physical condition and the energy he brought to a performance) or in statements by him (and by Penn) that this film was something undertaken mainly for the money. Yet Brando is breathtaking—when his first scene

ended, the audience I saw the film with broke into spontaneous applause, something I can't recall happening in a movie theater since I don't know when. It reflects no discredit on Jack Nicholson (who, after all, had his chance to shine in a dreary vehicle in *Cuckoo's Nest*) to say that, insofar as he and Brando will inevitably be seen as being in a competition, Nicholson places a distant second. Nicholson is fine, but he is stuck in the somewhat blandly written, starring role of hero, and, in McGuane's films, there really are no heroic roles for stars, only offbeat character parts; the actors who seem most at home in his films are those like Warren Oates, Harry Dean Stanton, Sam Waterston—character actors all.

But Brando, in the role of a bizarre hired gun, has what's essentially a character part, and is able to make of it a creation quite independent of the film's smart-aleck air of meandering game-playing. This is not to say that Brando is able to equal, say, his Paul in *Last Tango in Paris*; what he creates, in *The Missouri Breaks*, is a comic (but disturbing) grotesque, flamboyantly done up with vividly out-

landish gesture, accent, and costume: an unsettling combination of steely coldness and infectious charm. And though he's stopped short by the materials from creating anything of great depth, one can nonetheless revel in the dazzling theatricality of the surface. I suspect, just because of its outsized theatricality, Brando's performance may be in for some knocks, given the puritanical strain of much of what passes for serious film criticism, which seems to me all the more reason to praise him. At a time when several film-makers widely regarded as Old Masters are once again falling on their faces (even, one might say, face to face), it's all the more worth celebrating an actor so prodigally unstinting in what he gives to us: a man possessed of a face at once unmistakably his own and yet continually astonishing in its protean facets. By now, some twenty-six years after his film debut, he's become an Old Master in his own right, and merely allowing him an opportunity to add another portrait to the memorable gallery he has already given us is justification enough for any movie.

Theater

The Surprise of "Streamers"

Jack Richardson

I WENT to *Streamers* with reluctance. The only other play by David Rabe that I'd previously seen, *Sticks and Bones*, had been an insufferably self-righteous exercise, a theatrically clichéd study of our society and the Vietnam war that

JACK RICHARDSON, our theater critic, reviewed the New York Shakespeare Festival production of *Hamlet* in the April issue.

made the same arrogant generalizations about human life which it accused the average American of making. From the mind that produced such simple-minded vulgarity, I expected little, and was certain that, in giving *Streamers* its annual award, the circle of New York drama critics had again exceeded the circumference of rational judgment.

Happily, I was wrong. Although

Streamers certainly doesn't merit the more superlative descriptions of its achievements, it nevertheless is a play that has something to do with human behavior on this planet, a virtue that sets it immediately apart from *Sticks and Bones*. Moreover, it depicts that behavior with some dramatic passion and intelligence, qualities that Rabe must only have been graced with since writing the scene in *Sticks and Bones* in which abstractions of America's Mom and Dad encourage the personification of a sensitive son returned from the Vietnam war to commit a symbolic suicide at the dinner table as though they were urging him to have a second helping of ritualized roast beef.

Streamers is the sort of barracks-room melodrama that intends to reflect the social and psychological assumptions of the societies that produce the soldiers to fight for them. The popular plays, books, and films that followed World War I generally urged all peoples, threatened for the first time with the horrors of modern warfare, to abandon old nationalist prejudices and unite themselves into a pacifist brotherhood. World War II, because of its sharp and complex ideological issues, added certain political and social ambiguities to the individual's struggle to survive and subdue the impersonal mechanization of planned destruction. War was still hell, but at least, in the democracy of death, its victims learned that the democratic façade of peacetime life hid all sorts of dark "gentlemen's agreements." Racism, prejudice, poverty—these and other social blemishes found embodiment in the infantry platoon, as individuals won their rights to equality and respect through the ordeals of combat and their spokesmen made it known that they intended to guard these social spoils after the treaties were signed. Thus the post-bellum brotherhood of World War II was directed as much against the recrudescence of old injustices as it was against the outbreak of another war.

In *Streamers*, Rabe presents a social microcosm that has achieved neither the spiritual nor practical

goals of the old war dramas. It is a little cross-section of America that contains its own ferocious strategies and tactics, modes of slaughter and siege, that need no external war in order to be activated. The play is set in a cadre room where three young soldiers, all fairly intelligent, are beginning to feel the danger of Vietnam—the time is 1965—as well as the strain of military life. Indeed, the play's first scene depicts this pressure by having one of the trio, Richie, giving aid and comfort to a fellow soldier who has just attempted suicide in order to bring his military tour of duty to a premature end. However, it is soon apparent that Rabe is not concerned with writing a play about the abrasive effects of military life on the delicate civilian sensibility. Richie, although a homosexual with a rich, indulgent family background, finds the meticulous routines of the army amusing rather than tormenting, and is more disconcerted by his roommate, Billy, than by the growing likelihood of his being sent to die in a rice paddy. Through innuendos and campy humor, he flirts with Billy who, affecting a clean-cut American innocence, nevertheless understands that, beneath the buffoonery, the courtship is in earnest. The third man in the room, a black named Roger, who has overcome the constraining bitterness of his street background, believes that Richie's flirtation is just an act. Even when, in response to Billy's prodding, Richie admits his satiric manner masks genuine homosexual feelings, Roger—who has found in the army a certain civilized order that his former life lacked—refuses to admit that his friend's sexual proclivities are anything more than a momentary lapse in judgment, a case of a good man being led astray by "bad company."

All this is revealed with the sort of expansive humor and semi-enlightened understanding that one would expect of a New Army Dramatist. Even the play's NCO's, two fat grizzled sergeants who booze and reminisce about their days in the 101st Airborne, punctuating their memories with exchanges of the Screaming Eagle cry, seem pleasant enough simpletons in the

first part of the play, and one feels that *Streamers* is going to be little more than a *Tea and Sympathy* in uniform.

HOWEVER, into this situation of amiable incongruence comes a volatile, frightened, displaced person named Carlyle. He is black, but unlike Roger, he has found no tranquilizing sanctuary in the army, and sees the military as just another organized threat to his existence. Disheveled, suspicious, wrapped in a brooding defiance, Carlyle is one of those whom military service dooms either to the stockade or to a front-line rifle company. For he has neither the skills nor the personality to escape the most menial and hazardous duties of the service, and the drift and disconnection of his civilian life find a military reflection in his being permanently in transit, a figure heading without friends or assignment toward a battle he imagines as an execution arranged especially for him.

Using blackness as a way of introducing himself to Roger, he works his way into the room's society and begins taunting and provoking Richie, exciting and offending him with his crude readiness to accept sexual pleasure however he finds it. When Richie, partly to antagonize Billy, displays a willingness to be the "punk" Carlyle sees him as, an ugly confrontation begins to form. Flaunting his sexual desire, Richie asks that his two friends leave the room so that he may service Carlyle. After an argument in which Carlyle menacingly claims his and Richie's right to their rough pleasures, Roger, disgusted, walks away as he has apparently done many times before in his life when confronted with human viciousness. Understanding Carlyle's capacity for violence, he urges Billy to leave also. Billy, however, perhaps because he has been attracted to Richie, perhaps because homosexuality frightens or disgusts him, refuses to allow his room to be used for sodomitic revels. Carlyle sees in this refusal a personal affront, and in an explosion of misunderstanding and social collision, he stabs Billy and then, in frenzied panic, one of the barracks sergeants. They both die, and

MUCH of what I've described in *Streamers* is only approximated in the writing, and even where achieved, many of Rabe's ambitions depend on a certain critical complaisance in order to seem earned by the dramatic situation surrounding them. Nevertheless, there are real successes in this play—fine details of character, subtleties of mood and dramatic manner—that earn one's forgiveness for the fact that its reach is not sufficient to embrace the total mortal condition it strives for. Also, it must be added that the actors, under Mike Nichols's direction, perform with a tense, driving precision that makes even the more self-conscious speeches that Rabe has written seem only a theatrical mode of GI banter. Dorian Harewood, who plays Carlyle, is especially memorable. With his sullen shuffle and slurred, obscene grumbling, his eyelids' contemptuous droop, he portrays all that is unreachable, all that through fear and hate has withdrawn from the possibilities of human commerce. He incites our terror and our sorrow, which must be what Rabe, with his image of streamers—the thin, fluttering shape made by an unopened parachute—wanted us to feel as we fell with him to earth.

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Books in Review

Democracy in America

THE SPOILED CHILD OF THE WESTERN WORLD: THE MISCARRIAGE OF THE AMERICAN IDEA IN OUR TIME. By HENRY FAIRLIE. Doubleday. 350 pp. \$8.95.

Reviewed by SUZANNE WEAVER

HENRY FAIRLIE's most recent book is in the tradition of Tocqueville, Bryce, and other European observers whose distance sometimes helped them to see us more clearly than we see ourselves. Such observers have tended to understand America not as the product of particular historical circumstances or the sum of diverse parts, but as the realization of an idea, a coherent principle that precedes and animates everything in our politics and culture. Fairlie is no exception: he, too, has an American idea to give us, and its name is egalitarian democracy. Fairlie's egalitarianism is not Tocqueville's, with its pains and costs and subtle threats to private lives, but a thoroughly benign equality, so much the friend of liberty that liberty need have no defense against it. This kind of democracy has been the legitimating idea of our republic, he tells us, since its beginning; the present evils of American politics arise from the fact that the most important bodies of political opinion today, on the Left and the Right, have chosen to reject this American idea and the American social reality it reflects.

The American idea, as Fairlie defines it, is a radical one, strictly demanding maximum participation by all citizens and equality among them. But it carries with it none of the threats to liberty and individualism that we associate with European egalitarianism—because the American idea of equality, far from being hostile to those traditions which nourish individualism, is at the heart of those tra-

ditions and of every American's individual identity. Moreover, the democratic idea has not been experienced here as an intrusion on liberty because America's democracy has never had to struggle for acceptance against competing principles of political legitimacy, and so has never been forced to adopt the strident, abstract, diversity-denying qualities which have marred the European version of egalitarianism.

AND until recently, the American idea succeeded. At the end of World War II, Fairlie asserts, one could hardly have foreseen that so many Americans would in the name of self rebel against the democratic society that surrounded them. In 1945, America's middle class faced its future with a not-misplaced confidence that it stood not just for itself but for the country as a whole and even for the worthiest aspirations of the entire world. The spirit of this class, as befits a group that truly represents a democracy, was confident and generous. These were people who thought their values worth defending, who included among them a genuine concern for the welfare of others, and who enthusiastically embraced the public arena in which those values could be furthered.

Yet beneath the surface were already the opinions that would rob this class of both its confidence and its generosity. Fairlie describes five of these opinions—the “godfathers,” as he puts it, of the spoiled American child that was to be born. One of them was Darwin's: the cosmos provides no support for the idea that human existence can be understood in terms of human purposes. Another of the crucial opinions was that of Marx: the idea that human beings, as Fairlie describes it, “can be makers of their social environment.” The third was from Freud: the assumption that the key to human health lies in what is internal to the individual, rather than in what is common to members of a society. A fourth lay in modern art,

and the freedom it gave to individual artists to create their own visions of external physical reality. Finally—and most important, Fairlie thinks—there was Einstein, who in questioning mechanistic Newtonian explanations of the world not only denied that the physical sciences could explain and control human nature, but inadvertently gave some a justification for abandoning the rigor and discipline that had been the hallmarks of scientific inquiry.

The “godfather” ideas were not only pernicious; they were wrong. Ideas coming out of Europe, Fairlie says, have no explanatory power over the utterly different American social reality. Nevertheless, these European ideas, though wrong, came to permeate the popular culture of the postwar middle class—and with predictably disastrous results, because, in the European fashion, they separated individual consciousness from the external world and from the justifications and constraints of society, nature, and finally scientific thought itself. This separation carried with it an implied prescription: that the individual must create his own order out of experience, without help or hindrance from others. As Fairlie summarizes the formula: “Everyman the artist of his own life.” No surprise, then, that the culture and ultimately the politics following on these ideas—the politics of the 1960's and beyond—should be figuratively and literally full of “hallucinations.”

Much of this unnecessary disruption and self-destructiveness has come from the Left, which has perpetuated its share of heresies against the democratic idea. Fairlie argues that the central failing of the Left today is that it has abandoned the political arena altogether, out of entrancement with an idea of self that is incompatible with politics. The Left's anti-democratic, anti-political posture is evident in such things as the sentimental anguish over the death of God and the attempts to replace Him by

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stratagems ranging from Eastern religious cults to pantheism; it is also evident in the particularly insane form that the environmentalist movement has taken in America, a form in which Fairlie sees an effort to escape from the opportunities and limitations of human politics by using nature as a polemical weapon against man. And finally, on the Left, there is the massive example of the 1960's Movement as a whole—a *reductio ad absurdum* of politics, a tantrum by spoiled children, an attempt not to resolve concrete problems facing the polity but to manufacture and discard issues, whatever they were, for the purpose of personal gratification. The Left, deluded by an excessively large and transcendent conception of self, has abandoned the field in which democracy's fate is to be decided.

FAIRLIE has nothing but scorn for these heresies of the Left. But he reserves his real hatred for the heresies of the Right. For it is on the Right—especially in so-called neo-conservatism—that the natural enemies of democracy are to be found. In Fairlie's view, the new Right is an active opponent of the democratic idea as such and is busily engaged in attacking it.

The attack is, of course, unprovoked and unjustified, Fairlie thinks. Not only is the theory of American democracy no threat to decent "conservative" notions of liberty and individual excellence, but American practice has shown itself to be similarly benign. Contrary to the view of some critics on the Right, there is no "mass society" in America, of the lifeless and threatening quality painted by European thinkers like Ortega. In fact, there is no "mass" in America at all, only the diverse collection of distinctive individual lives that America permits a relatively full expression. There is no danger of the homogenization that critics have feared; the opposite is the case. If individuality is hindered by anything in America, Fairlie argues, it is the fact that there is not enough equality of condition to permit most people to express that individuality.

For example, the Jeffersonian ideal demands that we honor the



Postwar Europe

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right of self-expression, yet most Americans are still deprived of it. We systematically retard the progress of women and minority groups. We deny most people the right to meaningful work experience. We use the "computerized sociology" of Christopher Jencks and Arthur Jensen to spread false ideas about the limits of human capacities and of the ability of society to develop these capacities.

And in the midst of all these failings and sins against democracy, we are assaulted by the "new conservatives," by Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol and Daniel P. Moynihan, who tell us that even our present commitments to egalitarianism are having heavy and unanticipated costs. Such critics are wrong, Fairlie says; but more than that, they—and the European thinkers on whom they draw so heavily—are irrelevant in the American context. As Fairlie argues:

If he had his way, the American conservative would impose on his society the very forms that the United States was created to reject; and the one idea that never seems to occur to him is that, given the release of the I in our times, it is not the obedience or submission or acquiescence of that I that is required, but his participation and cooperation with others in the public. Instead of being a critic of democracy, a position that is today as necessary as it is tenable and reputable, the American conservative is an opponent of it, and so sets himself outside his own times and in isolation from the political tradition and experience of his own country.

These neo-conservative views have, in other words, the effect of "locking the people out of power"; and such exclusion has no part in the American tradition. In fact, the egalitarian, participatory, public tradition stands in need of strengthening, of restoration. Fairlie identifies a few specific areas in which the restoration must go forward: we must give people socially meaningful relationships in their work, we must support the women's movement in its opposition to the limits that sex oppression places on the free play of individuality, and

we must guarantee a sophisticated liberal education for all. But more generally, we must abandon our attachment to capitalism, which has become "the main obstacle to the rediscovery of the public in America." We must redistribute wealth and income. And the heretics of the Right must acknowledge their errors and give up their wrongheaded and selfish resistance to the American democracy and to what it promises the world.

ONE opened this book with a special curiosity and anticipation. First, there was the pleasure of Fairlie's past two books, *The Life of Politics* and *The Kennedy Promise*—books that had spoken about political life in a language that was neither too high to reveal its practical details nor too low to encompass their full range of meaning. There was also the puzzlement that reviewers had shown over *The Spoiled Child*; and one must conclude that their puzzlement was not merely disguised pique over Fairlie's temerity at criticizing both Left and Right, or his foolhardiness in depriving himself of the certainty of friends in at least one camp. For though this book is often a delight, full of the eclectic learning and acute observation that we have come to expect of Fairlie, it is also peppered with contradictions, excesses, and a rigidity that is new for him. Surely it is inappropriate for one who laments the decline of scientific self-discipline to exhort us to reject the use of aggregate data in policy analysis. It is surely excessive to praise the diversity of American society, and the scope it gives to individual variation, while dismissing in so few words the capitalism and decentralization that are hardly unrelated to the growth of the American economy and the opportunities for diversity that such growth provides. Surely it is ironic that an author who insists on the benign inclusiveness of the American tradition peremptorily excludes so many from it—not least the authors of the *Federalist Papers*.

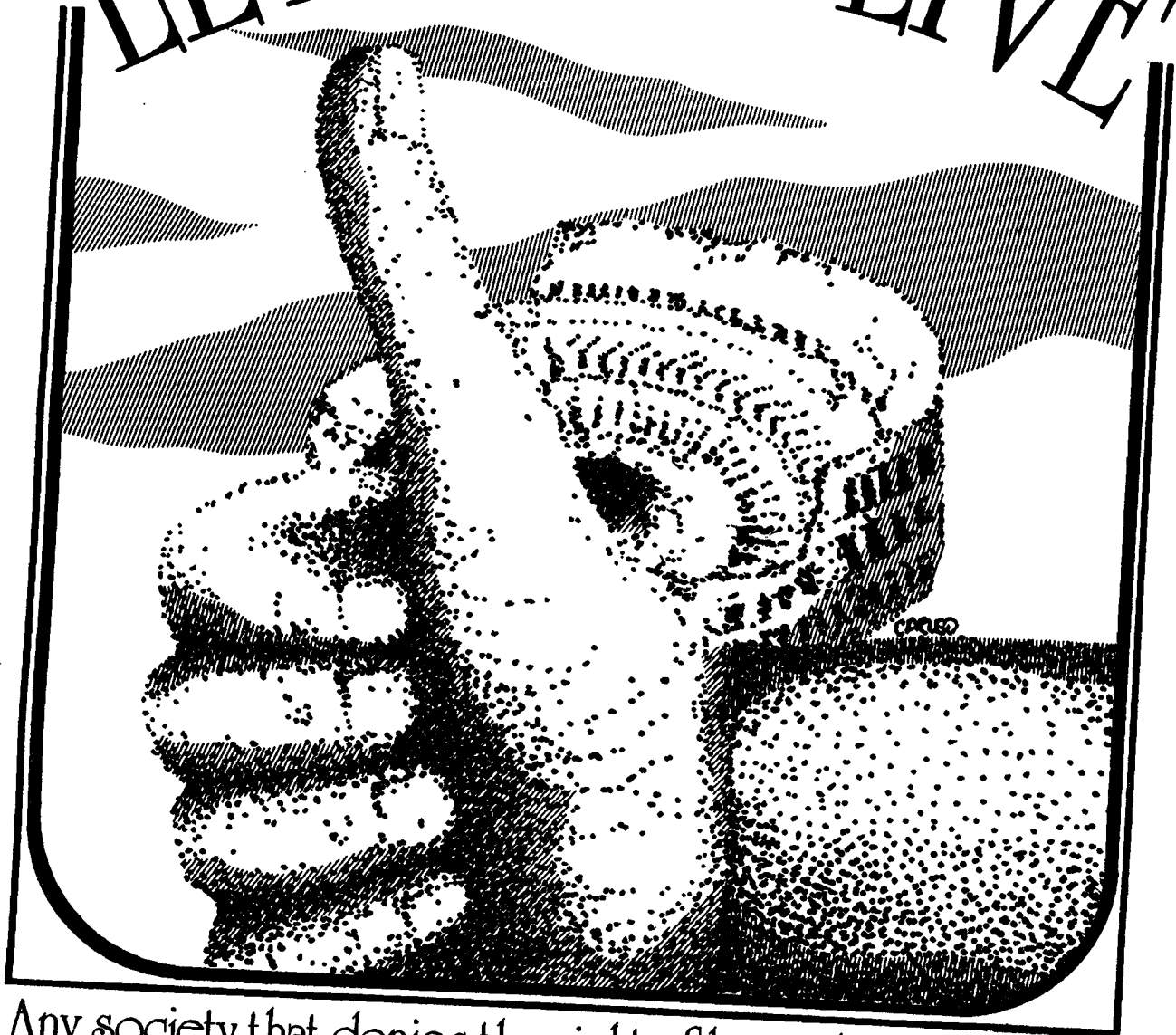
These puzzles are, as they say, no accident. There are things that must be embraced at one moment and dismissed the next, there are

people and ideas that must be excluded from the pale of the American democracy, there are things that must be praised while what is responsible for their existence is damned, because Fairlie insists on giving us an American idea of such harmonious simplicity, an idea without internal tensions or costs, an idea capable of including without strain all the good things we might desire from a society. This idea works, Fairlie says; and the problems of American politics come only because people insist on deviating from the idea, because the corruptions of foreigners and their dupes have intruded upon the body politic.

For Fairlie is not simply arguing that America has been particularly fortunate in its ability to reconcile values and interests that are theoretically in conflict, or even that this country's political tradition has overwhelmingly been a progressive one. Those observations have, to say the least, been made before. Fairlie is saying something more: that the liberties, particularities, private values, and questions of aggregate well-being that the Federalists, Tocqueville, and more modern successors have worried over so tenderly are things that the American idea of egalitarian democracy automatically provides for. The task of reconciliation does not need major attention, and those who purport to take the task seriously are in fact attacking the democratic principle itself. Are there people concerned about the discrepancy between what this country is coming to demand of government and what government seems to be capable of delivering? They are only displaying a technocratic mentality in the service of an un-American conservatism, says Fairlie. Does someone worry about the effects of centralization on private institutions? To do so is at bottom only to undermine the democracy that often needs centralization to maintain its vitality and accomplish its purposes.

SHORTLY after 1776, Condorcet wrote of American constitutionalism that it "had not grown, but was planned," that it "took no force from the weight of centuries

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but was put together mechanically in a few years." And the American John Adams, upon reading this European judgment, sputtered in the margin of the page, "Fool! Fool!" Louis Hartz, who relates this incident, thinks Adams's judgment was too harsh, and that Europeans must be forgiven when they simplify American politics in this manner. Maybe so; but it is patently obvious that our politics and political ideas have never had the simple and harmonious quality that Fairlie sees in them. The thinkers he dismisses as opponents of the democracy have always been an integral part of it—and no bad thing, either. As Tocqueville saw, it is the internal oppositions in a complex American idea, rather than the unimpeded progress of a simple one, that have given the republic the health Fairlie celebrates and the strength to withstand turbulence like that of the 1960's; it was no contradiction that those Fairlie calls democracy's enemies often stood with majority opinion of that time against the Movement's politics.

And if we must consider the question of who the real friends of democracy are, a useful place to start is with the politics of solipsism that Fairlie decries. For to produce such a politics, it is not enough that notions of self be freed from social or natural constraints; it is also necessary—as Fairlie recognizes when he diagnoses the importance of Marx for America—that the freed self then find a justification for returning to politics, convinced that the society can be changed so as to support it fully. Fairlie first denies this possibility, as he has done before. But then, as if tired of being the ghost at the banquet, he proceeds to allow and encourage it. He says on the one hand what he has said in other works, that there is enough satisfaction to be had from politics without turning it into a quasi-religious, transcendent activity. Yet on the other, he describes American political reality as something so different from anything that has gone before, as a place where the word has so successfully been made flesh, that in our political life individuals can indeed transcend the tension be-

tween self and others, between the public and the private, and that our politics can be those of wholehearted participation rather than a discontinuous alternation between reaching beyond one's limits and rediscovering them.

It has become common to observe about Western politics that such transcendental impulses contradict liberal democracy in theory and threaten it in practice. It is distressing that Henry Fairlie, of all people, should seem to have forgotten or to have rejected this lesson that he helped to teach us.

Jewish Herstory

THE JEWISH WOMAN IN AMERICA.
By CHARLOTTE BAUM, PAULA
HYMAN, and SONYA MICHEL.
Dial. 290 pp. \$8.95.

Reviewed by RUTH R. WISSE

IN accordance with the first principle of Jewish sociology—*vi es kristlt zikh, azoy yidlt zikh*, as do the Gentiles, so do the Jews—the rise of feminism has given impetus to a Jewish feminism that transposes Women's Lib into Jewish terms. The formula, originally a self-critical observation on Jewish trendiness and the lamentable tendency of Jews to follow where they ought, perhaps, to lead, has lost its ironic bite and is now merely descriptive: several years after the first outpouring of feminist writing, we were bound to expect, and to get, a tributary stream of literature on the Jewish woman.

Not that the result is wholly regrettable: a topic of proven fascination not merely to herself, the Jewish woman is an admirable subject of study and analysis, and a renewed interest in Jewish women through the ages, in Jewish grandmothers and Jewish mothers, will surely yield something of value.

RUTH R. WISSE teaches Yiddish literature at McGill University in Montreal and is the author of *The Schlemiel as Modern Hero* and *A Shtetl and Other Yiddish Novellas*. Her article, "American Jewish Writing, Act II," appeared last month.

But it is in the nature of trendiness to apply new insights overenthusiastically, simplistically, and without sufficient sensitivity to the implications of one's bias. Even the best of the new literature is flawed in this way, often distorting where it seeks to clarify and diminishing that which it sets out to exalt.

The Jewish Woman in America, "not an exhaustive, definitive history of all Jewish women in America," but "a schematic approach to certain problems as we've defined them," suffers, as this description by the authors suggests, from methodological imprecision. Arranged chronologically, the book devotes individual chapters to the German Jewish woman in America; to the East European Jewish woman in the old country, in America, and in the labor movement; to the differences between uptown and downtown women; and then, in an unexplained shift of focus, to the changing image of the Jewish woman in American Jewish literature over the past forty years and today. Different hands are visible in the uneven literary styles and levels of competence. The historical sections, like the chapter on Eastern Europe, strike a fine balance between explanatory overview and anecdotal detail, while other chapters lurch from case histories, not always representative, to meaningless generalizations: "Although most young unmarried women usually received little family encouragement to go beyond a minimal education, many took advantage of courses offered in the evening-school system. . . ."

A main concern of the book is to correct the false impression that Jewish women of the immigrant generation were "bearers and conservers of culture," "when their real contribution" was that of breadwinner. This correction forms part of a statement on relative values. Written from a feminist point of view, the book is predictably sympathetic to those whom it regards as forerunners of that view, the highest acclaim going to women in the labor movement who are "finally give[n] . . . their much-deserved roses." These are the culture heroines, and they are lovingly portrayed. Of a "same-

sex" marriage between two union women, the authors write: "The intimacy and love between them probably grew out of their intense and time-consuming interest in the same cause." No such idealism or affection is attributed to heterosexual Jewish marriages.

The authors' desire to present a favorable view of Jewish women in America comes into conflict with their feminist assumptions when they move from the immigrant breadwinners to the middle generation of more prosperous women who abandoned the labor force to seek their pleasure at home. Unable or unwilling to examine the reasons for this choice, the authors disguise their subjects as victims of various social forces: their husbands' prosperity and insistence that their wives be "ladies"; the prevailing American attitude that women do not belong in business; the pressure of assimilation; the social expectations projected by the media; and so forth. It is difficult to understand, except in terms of the authors' bias, how or why the active women of earlier chapters should have come to be replaced by these marshmallows of the will.

To emphasize their passivity, the book turns at this point from the direct treatment of Jewish women to their image in literature, as though they had no real existence any more but were only the products of the novels and stories in which they figure and which "direct them into a domestic role." On the surface the authors set out to rescue these women from their damaging stereotypes, but the confusion of literature with life ends up by giving those stereotypes a substantiveness they would otherwise lack. The book discusses Jewish "mothers" and "princesses" as though these were the categories of human life and Jewish women were really what American Jewish literature makes of them. It picks up the literary equation of domestic comfort with unhappiness—"Pearls around the neck, a stone upon the heart"—oblivious to the ideological allegiances of the writers who have made this equation. Facts, when available, are not allowed to cloud the authors' vision. When statistics show, for example,

that in a given period Jewish women attended college in greater numbers than their Gentile counterparts, the authors add that the "literature of this period [they cite one story and one novel] reveals that the parents—and often the young women themselves—did not take their daughters' education too seriously." Where facts and balanced descriptions might have broadened our understanding and clarified our image of American

Jewish women from the 20's onward, this deference to literature as the basis of discussion *and information* has only reinforced the stereotypes, and given them weight.

Although the book is about Jewish women, the feminist outlook is unmatched, except in the chapter on Eastern Europe, by any corresponding Jewish perspective. The book tells us that "the Jewish religious tradition has been abandoned, wholly or in part, by most

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American Jews," and from its description of that tradition as a male imposition on a submissive womanhood, this is understood to be for the best. The authors are not concerned with showing the effect on Judaism of the various social and historical trends they describe, not even to the extent of pointing out where Jewish and feminist values might be in conflict.* It comes as a shock, nonetheless, when the book concludes, without a hint of irony, in a tribute to the liberating Jewish influence of Erica Jong! Quite aside from the lapse of social and literary sensibility, what are we meant to understand here by "Jewish"? Imagine a book on the Jews that defined them as a subject people, lately freed from their ascribed and "internalized" roles, whose modern liberator is Norman Mailer. It would be called, I believe, an insult.

ON THE jacket of *The Jewish Woman in America* a blurb advises us: "Instead of a bas mitzvah, let's give our daughters this superb book." Instead of Judaism, let's have Women's Lib. As Jewish women evaluate Judaism and Jewish history from this new perspective, they might consider that the commandment against idolatry has always been equally binding on men and women alike.

Modern Building

AGE OF THE MASTERS: A PERSONAL VIEW OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE. By REYNER BANHAM. Harper & Row. 170 pp. \$15.00.

Reviewed by MICHAEL HOLLANDER

Age of the Masters is a brief, informal examination of traditional modern architecture and its underlying premises by an eminent English historian and critic of 20th-century building. The book is an updated version of Banham's *Guide to Modern Architecture*,

which was originally published in 1962. For the most part, the text has been expanded rather than revised: several of the essays have been extended and twelve critiques have been added, but the new critical views are quite consistent with those of the *Guide*.

The book's structure is episodic and fragmentary: the first of its two sections contains five essays which explore the notion of modernity and the essential constituents of contemporary design—form, function, construction, and space. The second consists of illustrated critiques of about forty-five buildings, assessed singly or together in small groups. Both the historical span and stylistic range are generous: the structures date from 1908 to 1968 and include engineered forms as well as Expressionist and early and late International Style designs.

The two versions of *Age of the Masters* straddle a historical divide of fifteen years or so, during which time modern architectural theory and practice have been subjected to radical reappraisals, both from inside and outside the professional ranks. The forthright attacks of Robert Venturi and Jane Jacobs, to mention only two of the better-known critics, have challenged many important presuppositions: that meaningful contemporary architecture need be monumental rather than modest and informal, and inventive rather than conventional; that it must abandon all the forms and lessons of the past before the certain vision of a vastly superior future; and that architects' own personal values reflect universal preferences and provide uniformly acceptable standards for design. While the revisionist views have had a far more noticeable impact to date on theories than on buildings, their implications are profound and they are largely responsible for the present spiritual malaise of architectural theory itself.

Surprisingly, *Age of the Masters* reflects little of the revisionist temper. Banham remains convinced that traditional modern architecture is still philosophically tenable if not appropriate in the mid-70's, and he vehemently defends his po-

sition. As such, the book is interesting not only because it describes the architecture of the modernist "heroic age" but because it is itself a document of important pre-revisionist ideological canons, vividly articulated and illustrated. As a theoretical period piece, it might hold considerable interest for present architects who wish to seek out such familiar philosophic landmarks as are located here either in order to confirm new positions or to reaffirm the validity of their earlier ones.

BANHAM's slightly anachronistic version of modern architecture is gloriously optimistic. For him, architecture

is more than a commentary on the human condition—along with war and peace and love and death and pestilence and birth, abundance, disaster, and the air we breathe, it is the human condition.

Architects have stoically borne this burden, accepting "moral responsibility for virtually the whole of the human environment," taking it "almost as a given right to apply their talents to any problem that required solving."

The revisionist mood of today has left the profession bereft of the innocence which once allowed it to sustain romantic attitudes like these. Many architects no longer feel that environmental design is capable of resolving large social and economic questions. Their once-supreme confidence both in architecture itself and the "new" is, after all, precisely what led them to conspire, in the early 60's, with developers and government to promote large-scale urban renewal as a social panacea. Many of the aesthetic tenets of modern architecture, moreover, now appear tyrannical: the compulsive preoccupation with spatial continuity and doctrinaire all-white surfaces in residential interiors militates against

* A new anthology, *The Jewish Woman*, edited by Elizabeth Koltun (Schocken, 320 pp., \$12.95; paper, \$6.95), seems to promise a greater sensitivity to such areas of conflict, but here too the women's movement, not Judaism, remains the "organizing center," the "Rosetta Stone" through which we view and interpret and give room to others."

MICHAEL HOLLANDER is an architect who teaches history and theory at the Pratt Institute School of Architecture in New York.

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The somewhat simplistic rationalist theory of design which emerges in Banham's critiques of individual buildings is equally estranged from current notions. Banham posits respect for function and utilization of an up-to-date building technology as the two conditions of well-designed architecture. But the conventional "form follows function" thesis, of which this is a representative expression, does not satisfactorily account for good design, even though it is widely used. "Function" evokes mechanistic images that are inappropriate in describing the many different sorts of design factors, only some of which impose calculable limits on building forms. An interior doorway, narrower than two feet, for instance, may be a hazardous fire exit, but doors do not simply become more functional as they get larger. Once the critical minimum is satisfied, there may be no simple way to determine an optimal door size. Ironically, functions quite often end by following forms: just as new furniture is designed to fit through conventionally-sized doorways, so new behavior patterns develop accommodating these restrictions. The pre-1960 notion of "functional determinism"—that functions are directly accountable for the appearance of forms—is useful primarily as a negative criterion: it is obvious when a particular form does *not* work, but it is not always possible to evaluate the relative efficiency of buildings as if they served discrete mechanical ends.

"Functional determinism" in Banham's use obscures another, more obvious fact of design: buildings have considerable aesthetic and psychological impact upon their users. Architecture helps sustain attitudes toward the world and toward the self, both by embodying these in symbolic images and by providing appropriate settings for activities. Such considerations tend to be deemphasized in Banham's brief, and are especially lacking in his discussions of such Expressionist architects as Eero

Saarinén and Michel de Klerk, or the eccentric and inventive Midwesterner, Bruce Goff.

THE other architectural criterion that figures strongly in Banham's accountings—also foreign to many of today's concerns—is that of technological currency. Discussing innovative engineering solutions to the problem of spatial enclosure (such as Buckminster Fuller's geodesic domes, which in the early 1960's were generally accorded little architectural significance), he warns:

... electronics and other "non-architectural" studies are further means to extend our control over environments, and if architects cannot make them part of their art then the human race may decide to disencumber itself of the art of architecture, just as it has disencumbered itself of the arts of witch-doctors and rain-makers.

Unfortunately, the precept that designers should seek out innovative construction technology in order to encourage its social acceptance belies certain economic realities which have become apparent in the United States during the last ten years. It may be that architects who have experimented with advanced technology have made their clients pay for the privilege. Until relatively recently, for example, brick masonry rather than pre-cast panels was the cheapest available exterior wall system in New York high-rise residential buildings, and there are still no signs that prefabrication has become a practical alternative to conventional building techniques (aside from the phenomenon of the mobile home). Actually, the vehemence of Banham's utterances on the subject suggests that technology holds other interests for him than its own potential benefits; along with his preoccupation with the utilitarian he seems to harbor a futurist urge to embrace technology's utopian promise, and to take a positive delight in the prospect of an irrepressible technological juggernaut dooming the most highly prized cultural manifestations to transiency. He relishes the thought that Mies van der Rohe could never find the per-

fect joint detail, because "sophisticated technological culture" would "offer him a better component tomorrow."

In *Age of the Masters* Banham proselytizes not only in behalf of earlier modernist ideas but also those of the Independent Group and the closely allied New Brutalist architects who espoused the cause of English Pop culture in the early 1950's. These movements criticized the English cultural establishment for its distance and insulation from the economic and social realities newly emergent in mid-20th-century life and represented above all by American consumer society. English Pop's inner circle, which included Banham, Lawrence Alloway, and Eduardo Paolozzi, among others, collected American commercial advertisements, ascribing rich iconic value to them, and found in Detroit and Madison Avenue the models for an economically revitalized society. The New Brutalist admiration for America's hard-headed pragmatic solutions to everyday problems probably accounts to some extent for Banham's fascination with a building technology that is sometimes no more than merely capable.

The social concomitants of English Pop were even more important; postwar English society was inspired by the prospect of greater upward mobility but still somewhat under the influence of the old class structure. It is possible to see how, in this context, the ideals of functionalism and technology, taken as exclusive design criteria, assumed new significance for Banham and his circle, because in theory they transcended existing cultural values and the social systems associated with them. Functional buildings were metaphors of democracy, devoid of social symbolism.

BECAUSE many of the architectural issues that absorb Banham reflect the 1950's English cultural situation, they will not seem so urgent to an American audience long accustomed to the dubious blessings of technology as well as to social mobility. The American reader's sense of dissociation will probably carry over to Banham's discussion of

buildings in this country. The New Brutalist ideology does not account for the monumentality so pervasive in American architecture, and Banham does not openly address himself to the phenomenon: he talks around monumentality in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, castigates it in Louis Kahn, and omits all references to the work of such central figures as Paul Rudolph, Kevin Roche, John Andrews, Cesar Pelli, and Gerhard Kallman in which he would have to confront the issue head-on. While he is quite partial to Buckminster Fuller and Charles Eames, it is in the image of the "radical hotrod" Bruce Goff that he finds a "more purely American vision." Goff is a kind of cultural "natural," untainted by "formal academic training"; he is both an agent for democratization—"consumer-oriented, sensitive to grassroots public moods . . . at home in Marlboro country," and at the same time a willing heir to a rich technological fortune, drawing *ad hoc* on an amalgam of industrial sources for his structural vocabulary. Appearing to search for the true identity of American architectural culture, Banham actually extrapolates from it those images which most clearly embody his own critical ideals.

Banham's idiosyncratic perceptions of this country's architecture contribute to a long-standing transatlantic dialogue between European and American culture, in the course of which there has been considerable misunderstanding on both sides. American architecture has generously offered refuge to European forms but invariably only after these have been divested of the encumbering ideological trappings in which they were initially conceived. Europeans, on the other hand, have used America as a cultural "mirror" of their own concerns; consequently they have been extremely selective about the images of America they wish to retain and have subjected them to extensive cropping and retouching.

Banham's ideas are nevertheless extremely important, and his observations of what is unique and consequential in both American and in general modern architecture have often been brilliant. The

strong catalytic effect of his writing upon readers is not accidental: his knowledge of the modern movement, enriched by years of relentless research, is probably as extensive as any historian's, and he has been both inventive and resourceful in devising critical and literary strategies to promote architectural attitudes. Not only does he stand apart from many of his peers in these respects, but his unabated enthusiasm, even in *Age of the Masters*, offers a positive example of what is so lacking in the passionless and cynical criticism that is the norm these days. But if his critical vision has been penetrating, the plausibility of his views is often severely compromised by his inability to resolve the struggle for authority within himself between the historian and the concerned citizen. His erudition is too often employed in misleading ideological assaults, and even on occasion in venomous jibes that merely serve to alienate rather than to persuade. This is a pity, for just at the moment traditional modern architecture needs all the friends it can get.

Revolutionary Hero?

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF LEON TROTSKY. By VICTOR SERGE and NATALIA SEDOVA. *Basic Books.* 296 pp. \$10.95.

TROTSKY. By JOEL CARMICHAEL. *St. Martin's.* 512 pp. \$15.00.

Reviewed by CARL GERSHMAN

IT is now thirty-six years since Leon Trotsky was assassinated by one of Stalin's agents. At the time of his death he was an exiled, isolated, and hunted figure, a victim of Stalin's desire to destroy him and everyone associated with him. Trotsky had a small following in Europe and America, but most Western intellectuals—the people who George Orwell said "take their cookery from Paris and their opinions from Moscow"—accepted the Stalinist propaganda line that he was a depraved political conspirator.

CARL GERSHMAN is *Executive Director of Social Democrats, U.S.A.*

THE VAPOR

Bryna Bar Oni

From her own painful memories Bryna Bar Oni reconstructs the incredible hardships of the years she spent as a teen-age girl in a band of Polish-Jewish partisans. They lived in forests and caves, often cold, starving, and ill, often outcast by non-Jewish partisans, always on the run and under threat of death—yet they were fighting the enemy and the story of such resisters is little known.

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All this has now changed. The British historian Robert Conquest has noted "a great residuum of vague admiration for Trotsky" among the various groups of Western revolutionaries and "progressives." He is now accepted as a man of the Left, an incorruptible and martyred revolutionary. But the new view of Trotsky, like the old one, is not the product of an honest assessment of the man and his work. It has much more to do with the relationship of these "progressives" to Soviet Communism and its various offshoots in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The reason for the rehabilitation of Trotsky is the need to salvage the Russian revolution and that which has issued from it by divorcing Communism from Stalinism. This has been made necessary by the thorough discrediting of Stalin since Khrushchev's famous "secret" speech at the 20th Soviet Party Congress officially acknowledging Stalinist terror. The revival of interest in Trotsky, the foremost anti-Stalinist Communist, is thus intended to lend credibility to the continuing pro-Soviet bias of leftist opinion.

But it will take more than the rehabilitation of Trotsky to clean up the image of pre-Stalin Soviet Communism. The forced-labor camps were not created by Stalin but by Lenin, almost immediately after the Bolshevik *putsch* in November 1917. It was not Stalin who eliminated all opposition political parties and outlawed factions within the ruling Communist party, but Lenin. True, Stalin constructed a vast edifice of totalitarianism, but he built it upon the solid foundations established by Lenin with the indispensable help of his comrade-in-arms, Leon Trotsky.

Trotsky was far from a moderating influence during the formative years of Soviet totalitarianism. On the contrary, on the crucial issue of workers' rights he advocated measures so harsh that even Lenin opposed him. In *Terrorism and Communism*, written in 1920 in reply to Karl Kautsky's anti-Bolshevik polemic of the same title, Trotsky advocated "the militarization of labor." "The labor state," he wrote,

"considers itself empowered to send every worker to the place where his work is necessary. And not one serious socialist will begin to deny to the labor state the right to lay its hand upon the worker who refuses to execute his labor duty."

In *The Life and Death of Leon Trotsky*, Victor Serge writes that Trotsky's "solutions were always drastic and uncompromising." Serge, a Trotskyist who left Russia in 1936 just prior to the Great Purge Trials, feels that no other policy was possible given the economic backwardness of the country and the failure of supportive revolutions in the West to materialize. This is the standard argument of anti-Stalinist apologists for the Bolshevik coup, but it does not answer the criticism that the coup itself—made in a country that Lenin himself admitted was "semi-Asiatic"—was an error of historic proportions.

Serge's biography, written in collaboration with Trotsky's widow soon after the assassination, is really a hagiography, and as such it was appropriately published for the first time in English last November 7, the anniversary of both the revolution and Trotsky's birth. It makes excuses for all the dictatorial acts of Lenin and Trotsky, reserving criticism only for Stalin's subsequent bloody deeds. Serge justifies the suppression of the "bourgeois press" immediately after the coup, and he condones the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly on the grounds that the peasants had voted for the Bolsheviks' opponents "without really understanding what was happening in Petrograd and Moscow. . . ." On the trade-union question he says only that Trotsky felt "the unions should be integrated into the state and that they should play an active part in the administration of production and transport." Trotsky's massacre of the Kronstadt sailors, the revolutionary heroes who rebelled in 1921 against the Bolshevik tyranny, is defended on the grounds that "a handful of anarchists" could not be permitted to threaten the revolution. (Serge's rationalization on this point is surprising since in 1938 he had taken the view that the massacre was the

turning point in the "degeneration" of Bolshevism.) He has no explanation for Trotsky's remarkable passivity during the succession struggle, except to say, ironically, that Trotsky refused to seize power when it was within his reach "because he felt that a socialist regime could not be run by decree."

Serge's indulgent attitude can be partly explained by the fact that he wrote at a time when the memory of Trotsky as a victim of Stalin was close and painful. Still, he is not nearly as effective in capturing the tragedy of Trotsky's later years as Natalia Sedova, whose reminiscences of her husband are interspersed throughout the narrative. Steadily the casualties mount—old comrades arrested and executed, Trotsky's children murdered or driven to suicide. "When Leon Davidovich was alone in his study," she writes, "I sometimes heard him heave a deep sigh and say to himself, 'I am tired, so tired. I can't take any more.' He would never have admitted it openly. The senseless humiliation, the moral collapse of old revolutionaries who had loved him and yet died covering him and themselves with obloquy, filled him with inconsolable anguish. . . ." Even sadder, his suffering was not redeemed by an understanding of how he shared in the responsibility for what had happened.

JOEL CARMICHAEL's study of Trotsky is much more satisfying in this respect, for he tries to explain how a man so immensely talented and committed to the noblest objectives could also be ruthless, profoundly mistaken, and politically inept. Carmichael recognizes Trotsky's talents: he was a brilliant journalist, a magnificent orator, a most effective administrator. Still, he was never able successfully to organize even a small political grouping. The reason for this goes much deeper than his preference for intellectual work as against the necessarily tedious day-to-day politics of intra-party struggles. He was, after all, obsessively pedantic and orderly in carrying out his official duties, so much so that Lenin cautioned against his "excessive preoccupation with the purely admin-

istrative side" of things. Trotsky's flaw was his inability to assume the responsibilities of leadership.

This was reflected in his personal temperament—"haughty, aloof, reserved, *noble*," in Carmichael's words. He was more a public performer than a political leader. As such, he performed best when the stage was already set, as it was in 1917 or in the years immediately thereafter when he took on, with unrivaled zeal and ability, specific administrative tasks. But he could not, to follow the analogy further, create his own stage. With Lenin gone, the political initiative passed to Stalin, while Trotsky, unable to act, merely complained.

Trotsky's belief in historical determinism contributed to his political passivity, though Carmichael finds a deeper cause in his Jewishness, or rather in his disavowal of it. He sees in Trotsky's rejection of his origins the source of many of his worst shortcomings: his shyness and extreme self-consciousness, his inability to inspire trust or to command authority, his consequent over-reliance on the "authority" of office or status, his inability to perform the basic act of maturity—taking responsibility—and, related to this, his worshipful attitude to what he called "the revolutionary historical birthright of the party."

The psychoanalysis of historical figures is always a risky business, for even where it is enlightening, as it is in this case, it obscures sociological patterns. For Trotsky was every inch the Jewish revolutionary, gifted in the art of analysis and agitation, but lacking the shrewdness and sound judgment more characteristic of a political culture that has known the responsibilities of sovereignty. Politics for Trotsky, as for other Jewish revolutionaries, was a secular faith, a form of displaced religiosity. This had terrible consequences, for the intensity of his belief in the party compelled him to justify the most ruthless acts in its name.

What is most remarkable about Trotsky is that he continued to believe in the party and the revolution and the workers' state long after it had become clear that these objects of faith had produced a monster. Though acutely aware of

Stalin's crimes, he was committed to the end to the fantastic notion that the "collectivist and planned" society of the USSR was a great step forward in the history of mankind. Even Lenin had glimpsed the possibility that he had been midwife to the birth of a bureaucratic despotism which bore no resemblance to anything that might legitimately be called socialist. But Trotsky kept the faith.

In his autobiography Trotsky wrote that "The feeling of the superiority of the general to the particular, of law to fact, of theory to personal experience, arose within me early and grew stronger with the years. . . . I was looking for laws beyond facts." In this way Trotsky cut himself off from the immediacy of his own experience: his "laws" were more meaningful to him than the slaughter of millions and even his own suffering. His failure to understand the revolution and its consequences was an immense personal tragedy, one that is hardly lessened by the present efforts of some to make of Trotsky the redeemer of the revolution.

The Bible and Literature

THE ECLIPSE OF BIBLICAL NARRATIVE: A STUDY IN 18TH- AND 19TH-CENTURY HERMENEUTICS. By HANS W. FREI. Yale University Press. 355 pp. \$15.00.

"KUBLA KHAN" AND "THE FALL OF JERUSALEM": THE MYTHOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN BIBLICAL CRITICISM AND SECULAR LITERATURE, 1770-1880. By E. S. SHAFFER. Cambridge University Press. 361 pp. \$25.00.

Reviewed by JAMES H. LEHMANN

THESE two very different works are both concerned with the relationship between the Bible and literature: specifically, with the way the Bible was read and literature was written in England and Germany during the 18th and 19th centuries. Robert Alter in the December 1975 COMMENTARY ("A Literary Approach to the Bible") noted

JAMES H. LEHMANN, a new contributor, is a graduate student in comparative literature at Yale.

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that the fields of biblical and literary criticism have long remained distinct. This is unfortunate, as Alter indicates, because the rigid distinction has deprived us of valuable literary insights into the Bible. But it is unfortunate also for two more basic reasons. First, the distinction masks the fact that many of our modern notions of what literature is developed simultaneously with new approaches to the Bible. Indeed, it would be truly remarkable if literary and biblical criticism were to have grown up independently: after all, the history of reading is primarily the history of the reading of Scripture. A second problem with the distinction is that, in opposing biblical to literary study, the former tends to be treated as a science, while in fact it is no more a science than is literary criticism; rather, it is a specific cultural form which arises from and contributes to other cultural forms.

Still, the distinction persists, which is all the more reason to welcome these two pioneering books by Hans Frei and Elinor Shaffer, both of which attempt to bridge the gap between biblical and literary study. Frei, a professor of religious studies at Yale who has written extensively on Protestant theology, compares the fortunes of narrative fiction and the interpretation of biblical narrative during the Enlightenment. Shaffer, an American Coleridge scholar who teaches comparative literature at East Anglia, traces the influence of the higher critical movement on romanticism. The two authors are fully at home in their own disciplines. Since it would be difficult to find today two more sophisticated disciplines than Protestant theology and romantic criticism, it is not surprising that there is more than an occasional slip into theological or literary-critical jargon in these books. This is probably an inevitable result of the historic split which Alter has noted, but it ought not to deter the reader from coming to grips with what is being said here.

The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative is a history of Protestant exegesis from Luther to Schleiermacher. The book, as the author notes, is written "under a thesis," namely, that much of the Bible is "realist narrative,"

that Luther and Calvin read it as such, but that certain philosophical trends of the 18th century unfortunately led to the abandonment of this narrative reading. According to Frei, the pre-critical Christian exegetes read the entire canon, from Genesis to Revelation, as one overarching verbal narrative whose meaning was the Christian message. Frei calls this reading "realist" because it views the meaning of the text as arising primarily from the verbal structure of the Bible itself, rather than from any reference to an external historical reality. Frei believes that narrative fiction works in the same way: it conveys a message (moral and social) by creating a meaningful fictional world in a history-like narrative.

The verbal coherence which Frei sees in the pre-critical reading of the Bible broke down in 18th-century England as a result of the impact of John Locke's empiricist theory of language, according to which words have meaning only by reference to non-verbal reality. The question then became, to what do biblical narratives refer, and the answer could take one of two forms: either that the Bible does in fact refer historically (i.e., the Old Testament contains actual prophecies of New Testament events), or that the biblical text does not actually mean what it says but refers instead to some extra-textual spiritual meaning. Whichever position one took, however, it was assumed that the words of the text were to be read in light of the subject matter and not, as had previously been the case, the other way around. This excluded Frei's "narrative option," which radically distinguishes the meaning of a text from its reference.

In Germany the loss of the "realist" option went hand in hand with the idea that a special orientation of consciousness was necessary for interpreting Scripture. Frei claims that no such disposition had been required previously since the reader was already, as it were, part of the reality being rendered by the Bible. In his lucid and stimulating chapters on Herder and Schleiermacher, the author describes the shift in emphasis from the words of the text to the consciousness of the

interpreter, and suggests interestingly that this growing exegetical self-consciousness accounts in part for Germany's failure to develop a strong tradition of realist narrative fiction during these centuries.

The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative is an immensely suggestive work. It is most valuable for the way it analyzes the philosophical bases of biblical criticism and dispels the misguided and still prevalent view of modern criticism as the final stage in a progressive development, akin to the classical view of the progress of science. Frei has shown the essentially *contingent* nature of the history of biblical interpretation—that different positions could or could not be held at given times—and for this alone the book deserves close and sympathetic reading.

The elegance of Frei's effort is marred, however, in two respects. One reflects a tension between Frei the historian and Frei the theologian: the former tells us how things developed; the latter is constantly pointing to how history *ought* to have turned out.* But the more fundamental problem with the book lies in its notion of narrative fiction. By insisting that the meaning of realist narrative is entirely contained by the words themselves, that character and incident are the sole, and mutually definable, elements of the novel, and that the novel presupposes no special orientation on the part of the reader, Frei paints an overly simple picture of the genre. There is no mention here of the author-reader relationship which is crucial to fiction (and *a fortiori* to a theology that would base itself on a narrative model); nor does Frei consider what Alter has called the essential self-consciousness of fiction. Although he bemoans the fact that the spirit of narrative fiction in 18th-century England did not spread to biblical study, he does not consider the highly ambiguous stance which the novelistic tradition took on precisely the question of providential design. In short, Frei's "narrative

* In a companion work, *The Identity of Jesus Christ* (Fortress Press, 1975), Frei has offered an actual "realist-narrative" reading of the New Testament.

option" looks less and less like a plausible 18th-century option and more and more like a 20th-century theological stance.

Frei's book seeks to salvage traditional hermeneutics and restore it to its biblical setting. Not surprisingly, perhaps, his objectivistic approach makes use of some of the presuppositions of the New Criticism which locates meaning entirely within a given text's verbal structure. Frei hopes to provide a modern solution to the oldest and knottiest problem of Protestant exegesis: how can an exegesis which declares itself to be *literal* still come away from the text with a spiritual meaning? But *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* ultimately points to the central equivocation which underlies both the New Criticism and Frei's Protestantizing adaptation of it: by focusing narrowly on the text, each finally brings to the text values and meanings from without.

FREI regrets the turn to romanticism in Bible criticism. From his perspective, the elevation of individual consciousness makes close attention to the text, to the Bible as narrative, impossible. Elinor Shaffer, on the other hand, begins where Frei leaves off. Her concern is precisely with romanticism's relationship to the higher criticism. Her book argues that romantic notions of the poetic vision and of the poet as visionary—ideas still with us today—must be seen in the context of contemporary developments in biblical criticism. More generally, her thesis is that the literary critic cannot afford to separate literature from "background." Shaffer succeeds fully, I believe, in establishing both points; in doing so, she suggests a number of new approaches to literary history.

"*Kubla Khan*" and "*The Fall of Jerusalem*" deals with four texts: Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," Hölderlin's "Patmos," Browning's "A Death in the Desert," and George Eliot's last novel, *Daniel Deronda*. The book also focuses on the work of the mythological Bible critics: Herder, Michaelis, Eichhorn, Schleiermacher, D. F. Strauss, and Ernest Renan. The scope of the work is astonishing but no more so than the ease with which Shaffer moves

from local reading to cultural influences of the broadest kind. This is comparative literature at its most suggestive.

The greater part of Shaffer's book deals with Coleridge's early intellectual biography and with his enigmatic "Kubla Khan." The second work in her title, "The Fall of Jerusalem," is an unwritten epic which Coleridge had planned in his early years. Shaffer argues that Coleridge could not write this epic—in her view "Kubla Khan" represents the lyric accomplishment of the original epic intention—because the higher Bible criticism, with which he was familiar even before he visited Germany, had vitiated the impersonal, objective view of sacred history upon which epic was based. The new mythological school of biblical critics understood the Gospels not as true eyewitness accounts but as records of the experience of the early Christian community. For the poet, this shift of emphasis from "fact" to "experience" made possible an idea of the poet as visionary, one whose imaginative activity sums up and recreates the experience of an entire community. Shaffer shows that through this idea, which became embodied in the apocalyptic vision of "Kubla Khan," Coleridge was able to satisfy two of his strongest personal needs: the need for a religious apologetic in the face of skepticism, and the need for a poetry of the supernatural. She also shows that "these concerns were at the center of romantic aesthetics. The need for imaginative reconstruction of events which could not be reliably known in any other way led directly to the elaboration of the poet's power to recreate and the audience's ability to share in the poet's process." For Shaffer such an aesthetics represented a far more radical break with the past than that effected later by modernism.

Shaffer's remarkable application of a complex of critical currents to close readings of her texts sheds new and important light on European Orientalism, an 18th-century phenomenon which has never been taken seriously enough. As she points out, the essence of Orientalism was not the widespread craze for Arabian-Nights tales or Chinese

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gardens, but the much more complex issue of Europe's relation to the Bible and the biblical past.

Her stress on the role played by German criticism of the Bible in the development of the romantic "epic" comes as a valuable revision of the views of critics like W. Jackson Bate and Harold Bloom who generally ascribe the failure of epic nerve in the romantic period to the overpowering and disabling impact of Milton. So persuasive is her argument here that one would have liked to see Shaffer apply her talents to an analysis of 18th-century Bible study in England, some of which should have been known to Coleridge very early, or to have considered her subject in light of the line of English apocalyptic poetry in the latter half of the 18th century.

The higher criticism of the Bible and the phenomenon of European Orientalism were both ways of coming to grips with the cultural problem of origins, and Shaffer rightly proposes that her approach might illuminate the work of other writers not generally considered under these rubrics. As she notes, whatever histories we have of the higher critical movement systematically assimilate it into theological or scientific orthodoxies; by contrast, she has put modern readers in her debt by making the history of biblical criticism a serious object of cultural study.

Aristocratic Democrat

THE CHARACTER OF JOHN ADAMS. By PETER SHAW. *University of North Carolina Press*. 318 pp. \$12.95.

THE ADAMS CHRONICLES: FOUR GENERATIONS OF GREATNESS. By JACK SHEPHERD. *Little, Brown*. 448 pp. \$17.50.

Reviewed by HERMAN BELZ

PROGRESSIVE American historiography down to the 1950's regarded not John Adams but Alexander Hamilton as the pre-eminent American conservative: though he defended the wealthy

few, Hamilton at least looked ahead to dynamic economic growth and fashioned instruments of national power that were later useful for liberal reform. Adams, on the other hand, as Charles Beard and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., observed half a century apart, adopted a static view of society that did not comprehend new modes of accumulating wealth but aimed at maintaining an unchanging social order. Not Jefferson versus Adams, as Gilbert Chinard had argued in 1933 in the first modern study of John Adams, but rather Jefferson versus Hamilton defined the main lines of development in the American political tradition.

Nowadays John Adams fares better than Hamilton. In a proximate sense his stature has risen because the Adams family decided in 1950 to open the family papers to the public, thus making possible a far more complete and satisfying knowledge of a complex personality. In a broader sense the new appreciation of Adams can be traced to the shift to consensus historiography after World War II, when, guided by the insights of Daniel J. Boorstin and Louis Hartz into the essential unity of the American political tradition, historians began to emphasize the fundamental agreement in early American politics on a body of beliefs—such as popular self-government, a capitalist economy, national unity, and constitutionalism—which in contrast to Europe formed a primordial American liberalism. In this intellectual climate John Adams emerged as a constructive statesman of the center who, critical of Hamilton's pro-British commercial and diplomatic schemes, kept the U.S. out of war with France in 1799. Furthermore, while it could not be denied that Adams was less sanguine than Jefferson in his view of the people, he was credited with a genuine commitment to republican self-government. At a time when a stable system of elitist politics seemed the *summum bonum* of democratic political culture, Adams's attempt to define the proper relationship between elite groups and the people seemed prophetic and pertinent.

In *The Character of John Adams*

Peter Shaw integrates the two principal lines of inquiry in Adams scholarship by attempting, in his own words, to personalize Adams's ideas and to intellectualize his behavior. After describing Adams's revolutionary activities, Shaw observes his growing distrust of the people, criticism of the idea of equality, and fear that the spirit of commercialism was undermining republican morality. Shaw rejects the notion, however, that Adams became a European-style conservative in any systematic or consistent sense. Throughout his life Adams was alternately optimistic and pessimistic about American self-government, trusting and distrusting of the electorate. Above all, though—and this is the significant interpretative point—Adams did not abandon the vision, central to American liberalism, of a land meant to illuminate the old world with the true principles of republicanism. In important respects Shaw's Adams is similar to Clinton L. Rossiter's portrait of Adams as an un-Burkean moderate conservative who, though more skeptical than others of America's uniqueness, nevertheless adhered to the aboriginal American belief in the providential mission of the new republic.

UNLIKE earlier works, however, Shaw's study has the effect of calling into question the seriousness of Adams's ideas. This effect results from the author's assumption that those ideas grew entirely out of the psychological tensions produced by personal experience. Adams's thought, Shaw writes, discontinuous, disordered, and sporadic as it was, reflected his incomplete and uncomposed personality. Adams was formed by events, "and on events he continued to depend." While no one would deny the shaping influence of events on intellectual development, the approach employed in this book seems to reduce intellect and thought to a series of psychological reflexes. Shaw succeeds so well in personalizing Adams's ideas that in the end one sees them as merely idiosyncratic and epiphenomenal.

If Shaw's book does not adequately appreciate the role of ideas, it is nonetheless an illuminating

HERMAN BELZ is professor of history at the University of Maryland.

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psychological study. Adams, like most of his founding-father colleagues, was ambitious in the pursuit of fame. Unlike most of them, however, he pursued this goal with emotional and moral sensibilities heavily influenced by Puritanism. The result, as Shaw convincingly describes it, was that Adams sought the recognition of posterity by way of a painful method of self-improvement through self-denial. Guarding against feelings of pride, Adams rose to the crises in public affairs through which he would make his reputation by withdrawing into himself and, in his diary, scrutinizing himself in a mortifying way to gain the feeling of justification he needed in order to act. Inheriting a tradition of public service from his Puritan ancestors, Adams developed an extraordinary sense of personal integrity that led him to behave often in unpopular ways.

John Adams pursued his conception of personal duty in an erratic and peculiar manner that has led recent writers to regard him affectionately as a "character." Yet it was his sense of independence, integrity, and devotion to public service that came to define the essence of the Adams family. Three generations of Adamses in the 19th century affirmed and refined John Adams's ideal of disinterested duty, creating ironically an aristocratic tradition out of the republican principle of civic virtue.

The Adams Chronicles by Jack Shepherd tells the story of Presidents John and John Quincy Adams, Civil War diplomat Charles Francis Adams, and, in the fourth generation, literary intellectuals Henry and Brooks, businessman Charles Francis, Jr., and gentleman-reformer John Quincy Adams II. In a work that is meant to complement the public-television series, *The Adams Chronicles*, Shepherd combines political and personal narrative in a pleasantly informative way. He is especially interested in the personal side of

things, and if the book has a point it is to show that these great men were after all human beings who experienced many of the same problems that beset ordinary people. To his credit, Shepherd points to difficulties that arose from a family system that singled out certain members for special attention. The early deaths of three sons in two generations due to alcoholism and overwork illustrate the problem. Shepherd also touches on the difficulties faced by the women in the family. The Adamses' darker side is thus revealed, more so than in the work with which Shepherd's book may be compared, *The Adams Family* by James Truslow Adams (1930). It should be noted, however, that in literary and historical imagination the older work is infinitely superior.

To give *The Adams Chronicles* some intellectual ballast, Daniel J. Boorstin has written an introductory essay examining the problem, raised by the Adamses, of the response of American society to the European institution of the family. The family in Europe, Boorstin observes, was an effective institution for accumulating distinction and providing a source of leadership. American society, however, insisted on judging each generation, as each man, on its own merits. Strictly within their own system the Adamses caused anxiety enough for themselves by trying to uphold the family tradition of public service and intellectual achievement. This pressure was compounded, Boorstin argues, by the fact that their highly self-conscious involvement in their own past contradicted the value that democratic society placed on the self-made man. John Adams's republican ideal of civic virtue became an aristocratic conception of a family in the nation's service that in the increasingly democratic 19th century became incompatible with American values. The conflict and its denouement were most apparent in the career of Henry Adams, who, as an aristocratic intellectual, in

later life became a virtual émigré from America, living most of the time in Europe.

WHAT finally is still living in the ideas of John Adams and the Adams family? John Adams's warning against the power both of numbers and elites and his insistence on the need for balanced government are surely pertinent, though one doubts that they can win wide adherence. Similarly, the belief in America's republican mission receives but tenuous backing in the contemporary neo-isolationist climate. What does attract greater popular attention, however, is the Adams tradition of disinterested public service. Viewed against the debasement and demoralization of public life in the past decade, the Adamses offer a model of moral courage and elite leadership, bordering on the apolitical, that many believe is timely and necessary. Thus the television producer of *The Adams Chronicles* has observed that during the Watergate hearings John Adams was frequently quoted on the question of standards for public officials, while Gore Vidal has urged us to praise the Adamses for their moral and intellectual standards and their noble failure in a society devoted to easy crass success.

It is not clear whether the Adams appeal extends to working-class and ethnic groups, but the best-seller status of Shepherd's book and the enthusiastic response given the television series suggest that the upper-middle class finds attractive the Adams tradition of elite public service. This self-made aristocratic family which scorned marketplace values and mass opinion may even provide an example of the kind of self-confident elite, the need for which has recently been enunciated by a few voices on the Left. At long last, then, in the improbable context of democratic discontent, the republican Adamses are receiving some of the recognition they so diligently pursued.

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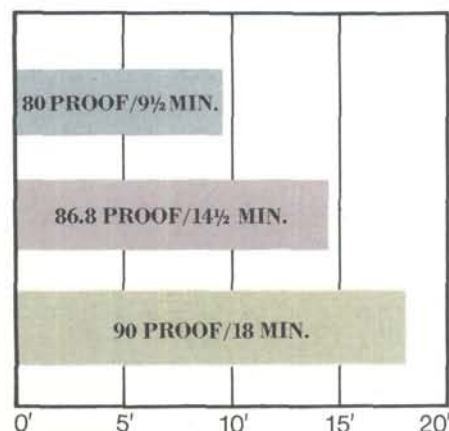
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To illustrate the merits of a slightly higher proof, we chilled a jigger of Scotch (about 1.7 ounces) with 6 one-inch ice cubes. We measured the amount of water added to the Scotch after each minute and computed the change in proof.

As you might expect, the proof falls rapidly during the first few minutes of cooling, but more slowly after the whisky is chilled. The diagram shows how long it takes Scotches of three different proofs to reach 45 proof when poured over ice. If proof is considered to be a measure of freshness, 90-Proof *Famous Grouse* has a 3½ minute advantage over 86.8-Proof Scotch after 18 minutes on the rocks. (Because it takes 3½ minutes longer to reach 45 proof.) Its advantage over 80-Proof Scotch is 8½ minutes.

Proof, of course, is not the only influence on the flavor of a blended Scotch. The proportion of malt to grain whiskies,

origins of the malts, aging methods—these are also important factors determining the relative richness of Scotch flavor.

The makers of *Famous Grouse*—Matthew Gloag & Son of Perth, Scotland—have been producing Scotch in the same family for six generations. And they have performed their most noble feat in the rich blend they created for *Famous Grouse* Scotch. Its flavor—so remarkable at the outset—holds firmly to its character during prolonged contact with ice.

Knowledge of Scotch, however, cannot be indefinitely pursued in the abstract. Your learning process must ultimately include a leisurely sip of *Famous Grouse* on the rocks. For Scotch drinking is one of those pleasures enjoyed most, not in the pursuit, but in the conquest. Scotland's greatest bard, Robert Burns, said it best:

*"Gie me a spark o' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire."*



90 PROOF, BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY. BOTTLED IN SCOTLAND. IMPORTED BY AUSTIN, NICHOLS & CO., LAWRENCEBURG, KY.